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ESSAYS

ON

THE PICTURESQUE.

VOL. I.

1875

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

ESSAYS

John A. ON *Giffman*

THE PICTURESQUE,

AS COMPARED WITH

THE SUBLIME AND THE BEAUTIFUL;

AND, ON

THE USE OF STUDYING PICTURES,

FOR THE PURPOSE OF

IMPROVING REAL LANDSCAPE.

BY UVEDALE PRICE, Esq.

QUAM MULTA VIDENT PICTORES IN UMBRIS, ET IN
EMINENTIA, QUÆ NOS NON VIDEMUS!

Cicero.

VOL. I.

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VOL. I

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PREFACE

TO THE FIRST VOLUME.



AS the general plan and intention of my first publication have been a good deal misunderstood, I wish to give a short account of them both.

The title itself might have shewn, that I aimed at something more than a mere book of gardening; some, however, have conceived that I ought to have begun by setting forth all my ideas of lawns, shrubberies, gravel-walks &c.; and as my arrangement did not coincide with their notions of what it ought to have been, they seem to have concluded that I had no plan at all.

I have in this Essay, undertaken to treat of two subjects, distinct, but intimately, connected; and which, as I conceive, throw a reciprocal light on each other. I have begun with that which is last mentioned in the title, as I thought some previous discussion with regard to pictures and picturesque scenery, would most naturally lead to a particular examination of the character itself. In the first chapter, I have stated the general reasons for studying the works of eminent landscape painters, and the principles of their art, with a view to the improvement of real scenery; and in order to shew how little those works, or the principles they contain, have been attended to, I have supposed the scenery in the landscape of a great painter, to be new modelled according to the taste of Mr. Brown. Having shewn this contrast between dressed scenery, and a picture of the most or-

namented kind, I have in the second chapter compared together two real scenes ; the one, in its picturesque, unimproved state ; the other, when dressed and improved according to the present fashion. The picturesque circumstances detailed in this scene, very naturally lead me in the third chapter, to investigate their general causes and effects ; and in that, and in the six following chapters, I have traced them, as far as my observation would enable me, through all the works of art and of nature.

This part, the most curious and interesting to a speculative mind, will be least so to those, who think only of what has a direct and immediate reference to the arrangement of scenery : that, indeed, it has not ; but it is a discussion well calculated to give just and enlarged ideas, of what is of no slight importance—the general character of each place, and the particular

character of each part of its scenery. Every place, and every scene worth observing, must have something of the sublime, the beautiful, or the picturesque; and every man will allow, that he would wish to preserve and to heighten, certainly not to weaken or destroy, their prevailing character. The most obvious method of succeeding in the one, and of avoiding the other, is by studying their causes and effects; but to confine that study to scenery only, would, like all confined studies for a particular purpose, tend to contract the mind; at least when compared with a more comprehensive view of the subject. I have therefore endeavoured to take the most enlarged view possible, and to include in it whatever had any relation to the character I was occupied in tracing, or which shewed its distinction from those, which a very superior mind, had already investigated; and

sure I am, that he who studies the various effects and characters of form, colour, and light and shadow, and examines and compares those characters and effects, and the manner in which they are combined and disposed, both in pictures and in nature,—will be better qualified to arrange, certainly, to enjoy, his own and every scenery, than he who has only thought of the most fashionable arrangement of objects ; or who has looked at nature alone, without having acquired any just principles of selection.

I believe, however, that this part of my Essay, and the very title of it, may have given a false bias to the minds of many of my readers : I am not surprised at such an effect, for it is a very natural conclusion, and often justified, that an author is partial to the particular subject on which he has written ; but mine is a particular case. The two characters which Mr. Burke has

so ably discussed, had, it is true, great need of investigation; but they did not want to be recommended to our attention: what is really sublime, or beautiful, must always attract or command it; but the picturesque is much less obvious, less generally attractive, and had been totally neglected and despised by professed improvers: my business therefore, was to draw forth, and to dwell upon those less observed beauties. From that circumstance it has been conceived, or at least asserted, that I not only preferred such scenes as were merely rude and picturesque, but excluded all others.

The second part is built upon the foundations laid in the first; for I have examined the leading features of modern gardening, in its more extended sense, on the general principles of painting: and I have shewn in several instances, especially in all that

relates to the banks of artificial water, how much the character of the picturesque has been neglected, or sacrificed to a false idea of beauty.

But though I take no slight interest in whatever concerns the taste of gardening in this, and every other country, and am particularly anxious to preserve those picturesque circumstances, which are so frequently and irrecoverably destroyed, yet in writing this Essay, I have had a more comprehensive object in view: I have been desirous of opening new sources of innocent, and easily attained pleasures, or at least of pointing out, how a much higher relish may be acquired for those, which, though known, are neglected; and it has given me no small pleasure to find that both my objects have in some degree been attained.

That painters do see effects in nature, which men in general do not see, we have,

in the motto prefixed to this Essay, the testimony of no common observer; of one, who was sufficiently vain of his own talents and discernment in every way, and not likely to acknowledge a superiority in other men without strong conviction. It is not a mere observation of Cicero; it is an exclamation: *Quam multa vident pictores!* it marks his surprise at the extreme difference which the study of nature, by means of the art of painting, seems to make almost in the sight itself. It may likewise be observed, that his remark does not extend to form,—in which the ancient painters are acknowledged to be our superiors; not to colour,—in which they are also conceived to be at least our rivals; but to light and shadow,—the supposed triumph of modern, over ancient art: on which account, the professors of painting since its revival, have a still better right to the compliment

of so illustrious a panegyrist, than those of his own age.

If there were no other means of seeing with the eyes of painters, than by acquiring the practical skill of their hands, the generality of mankind must of course give up the point; but luckily, we may gain no little insight into their method of considering nature, and no inconsiderable share of their relish for her beauties, by an easier process—by studying their works. This study, has one great advantage over most others; there are no dry elements to struggle with. Pictures, as likewise drawings and prints, have in them what is suited to all ages and capacities: many of them, like Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, display the most fertile and brilliant imagination, joined to the most accurate judgment and selection, and the deepest knowledge of

nature: like that extraordinary work, they are at once the amusement of childhood and ignorance, and the delight, instruction, and admiration, of the highest and most cultivated minds.

It is not, however, to be supposed, that theory and observation alone will enable us to judge either of pictures or of nature, with the same skill as those, who join to the practical knowledge of their art, habitual reflection on its principles, and its productions; between such artists, and the mere lover of painting, there will always be a sufficient difference to justify, the remark of Cicero:* but by means of the

* There is an anecdote of *Salvator Rosa*, which shews the very just and natural opinion that painters of eminence entertain of their superior judgment with regard to their own art: it is also highly characteristic of the lively, impetuous manner of the artist of whom it is related, and whose words might no less justly be applied to real ob-

study which I have so earnestly recommended, we may greatly diminish the immense distance that exists between the eye of a first rate painter, and that of a man who has never thought on the subject. Were it, indeed, possible that, a painter of great and general excellence could at once bestow on such a man,—not his power of imitating, but of distinguishing and feeling the effects and combinations of form, colour, and light and shadow,—it would hardly be too much to assert that a new appearance of things, a new world would suddenly be opened to him; and the bestower might preface the miraculous gift, with the words in which

jects, than to the imitation of them. *Salvator Rosa, essendogli mostrata una singolar pittura da un dilettante, che insieme in estremo la lodava; egli, con un di quei suoi soliti gesti spiritosi esclamò; O pensa quel che tu diresti, se tu la vedessi con gli occhi di Salvator Rosa!*

Venus addresses her son, when she removes the mortal film from his eyes.

Aspice, namque omnem quæ nunc obducta tuenti

Mortales hebetat visus tibi, et humida circum

Caligat, nubem eripiam.

PREFACE

TO THE
PRESENT EDITION.

IN this edition, the reader will find some considerable additions; but the chief difference is in the arrangement, which I am very conscious, was in many parts extremely defective. Several of the chapters in the first volume are entirely new modelled; and in the second, a great deal of new arrangement has taken place, especially in the middle part of the last Essay. Those readers only (should there be any such) who may have the curiosity to compare the present with former

editions, can judge of the pains that the new modelling has cost me: but I shall think them well bestowed, if I should be less open to those criticisms, which must have presented themselves to every reader of a methodical turn of mind. Another alteration, which I trust will be thought an improvement, is that of throwing the greater part of the notes to the end of the volumes. One note, of much greater length than I could have wished, is added to the second volume, in consequence of a very pointed attack from my friend Mr. Knight, in the second edition of the *Analytical Inquiry*; it is indeed almost a controversial dissertation on the temple of Vesta, usually called the Sybill's temple, at Tivoli: I am persuaded, however, that I have made no small amends for the tediousness of controversy, by some very curious information I received on the subject,

the accuracy of which I have no doubt may be safely relied on. The third volume remains nearly as it was, with scarcely any alteration: there is, however, one addition to the Dialogue, of a few *last* words, by way of summing up the points of the controversy, and likewise an appendix, which, like the note just mentioned, was occasioned by some strictures of Mr. Knight's, and almost equals it in length. I am still very largely in his debt, on Mr. Burke's, as well as on my own account; and am ashamed of being so long in arrears. However slow, I hope at last to leave nothing unpaid; but as I have undertaken the defence of such a man as Mr. Burke, I feel anxious that it should be as little unworthy of him, as it is in my power to make it.

CONTENTS.

TO VOL. I.

CHAPTER I.

	<i>Page.</i>
T HE reasons why an improver should study pictures, as well as nature.....	1
The artist's design in real scenery, must change with the growth and decay of trees: the only unchanging compositions, are in the designs of painters	7
Distinction between the painter and the improver	8
Between looking at pictures, merely with a reference to other pictures, and studying them with a view to the improvement of our ideas of nature	11
The general principles of both arts the same	13
The manner in which a picture of Claude, would probably be improved by Mr. Brown—Anecdote of an <i>improved</i> picture of Sir Joshua Reynold's. Note.....	15
The Colonna Claude. Note.....	18

CHAPTER II.

Causes of the neglect of the picturesque in modern improvement	21
Intricacy and variety, characteristics of the picturesque: monotony and baldness of improved places.....	22
A dressed lane	24
A lane in it's natural and picturesque state	ibid.
Near the house, picturesque beauty must often be sacrificed to neatness	29
Different ways in which a picturesque lane might probably be improved	30
Examples of two lanes that have been improved	32

CHAPTER III.

General meaning of the word picturesque.....	37
Mr. Gilpin's definition of it examined ..	38
It has not an <i>exclusive</i> reference to painting.....	40
The beautiful and the sublime, have been pointed out and illustrated by painting, as well as the picturesque.....	ibid.
Apology for making use of the word picturesqueness.....	42
The picturesque, as distinct a character, as either the sublime or the beautiful	43
The picturesque arises from qualities directly opposite to those of beauty	49
What those qualities are.....	50
Picturesque and beautiful in buildings	51
Ditto in water.....	56
Ditto in trees	57
Ditto in animals	58
Ditto in birds	61
Ditto in the human species	63
Ditto in the higher order of beings	ibid.
Ditto in painting.....	64

CHAPTER IV.

General distinctions between the picturesque and the beautiful	68
Ditto between the picturesque and the sublime..	83
The manner in which they operate on the mind.....	87
Of terror as a cause of the sublime.....	93

CHAPTER V.

To create the sublime above our contracted powers:—The art of improving therefore depends on the beautiful and the picturesque.....	102
Beauty alone has hitherto been aimed at.....	103
But they are seldom unmixed; and insipidity has arisen from trying to separate them	104
Instance of their mixture in the human countenance	ibid.
Ditto in flowers, shrubs and trees	105
Ditto in buildings	109
Illustration, from the mixture of discords with the most flowing melodies in music.....	110

CHAPTER VI.

It has been doubted by some whether smoothness be essential to the beautiful	113
Effects of smoothness, and of roughness, in producing the beautiful and the picturesque, by means of repose and irritation ..	115
Exemplified in scenery	121
Repose, the peculiar characteristic of Claude's pictures	125
Character of the pleasures that arise from irritation	126
Character of Rubens's light and shadow	128
Ditto of Correggio's	129
Ditto of Claude's—his landscapes compared with those of Rubens—Illustration from the different characters of smiles, Note	131
Ditto of Rembrandt	133
Anecdote of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Note	135
Antique statues, standards of grandeur and beauty	138
The grandest style of painting, that of the Roman and Florentine schools	193
The Venetian style, the ornamental, or picturesque	142
Correggio's style, as described by Sir Joshua Reynolds, might justly be called the beautiful style	143
Each style of painting, corresponds with the characteristic marks of the grand, the beautiful, and the picturesque in real objects	145

CHAPTER VII.

Breadth of light and shadow	147
Twilight.—Quotation from Milton. Note	150
Its effect should be studied by improvers	152
Difficulty of uniting breadth with detail	156
Breadth alone insufficient; but preferable to detail without breadth	158
Application of the principle of breadth to improvement	159
Objections to buildings being made too white	160
Mr. Walpole's expression of the gentleman with the foolish teeth. Note	163
Distinctness	166

CHAPTER VIII.

On the beautiful, and what might be called the picturesque <i>in colour</i>	163
Why autumn, and not spring, is called the painter's season....	171
Blossoms, which are so beautiful near the eye, have a spotty appearance in the <i>general</i> landscape.....	174
The first requisite of a picture, is to be a whole.....	174
The colouring of the Venetian school formed upon the tints in autumn—Note on the <i>Ganymede</i> of Titian	180
That of Rubens, on the fresh colours of spring	183
Character of the atmosphere, and the lights and shadows, in spring, summer, autumn, and winter	184

CHAPTER IX.

On ugliness	187
Angles not ugly	ibid.
Deformity is to ugliness, what picturesqueness is to beauty....	189
But has in itself no connection with the sublime	190
Union of deformity with beauty.....	ibid.
In what deformity consists.....	191
Ugliness and deformity in hills and mountains.....	192
in ground	193
in trees	196
in buildings	197
Ugliness in colours.....	199
Effect of ugliness and deformity compared	200
Illustrated by sounds.....	201
Effects of the picturesque, when mixed with ugliness.....	202
The excess of the qualities of beauty, tend to insipidity: those of picturesqueness to deformity.—Anecdote of an Anatomist. Note.....	204
Application to improvements	207
Beauty, picturesqueness, and deformity, in the other senses ..	208
General summing up of the arguments, to shew that the picturesque has a distinct character.....	210
By what means the word came to be introduced into modern languages	211

The character, not less distinct than those of envy, revenge, &c.	220
The reason why its distinctness has not been so accurately marked	223
And why there are not more distinct terms and discriminations in matters of taste	224

PART II.

How far the principles of painting have been applied to improvements	228
Kent the first improver on the present system	230
General character of the old, and of the present system	ibid.
Character of Kent	233
Reasons for having spoken of him in such strong terms	235
A painter of a liberal and comprehensive mind, the best judge of his own art, and of all that relates to it: such was Sir Joshua Reynolds	236
Character of his discourses	237
Nothing so contracts the mind, as mere practical dexterity....	ibid.
Illustration from such dexterity in music. Note	ibid.
Want of connection, the great defect of modern gardening ..	238
Connection the great principle of painting	ibid.
Illustrated by the connecting particles in language. Note	240
Mr. Brown—Quotation from Ariosto. Note	242
Grandeur in miniature. Note	243
The clump	244
Anecdote of Mr. Brown, when High Sheriff. Note	245
The belt	246
That, and the avenue, compared	ibid.
Further remarks on the avenue	248
An avenue condemned by Mr. Brown, but saved by the owner. Note	249
Distinction between beautiful, and picturesque intricacy	252
Impossible to plan any forms of plantations that will suit all places—Illustration from the art of medicine. Note	253
The usual method of thinning trees for the purpose of beauty ..	255
Ill effect of breaking an avenue into clumps	256

CHAPTER II.

Trees considered generally	259
Necessary accompaniments to rocks, mountains, and to every kind of ground and water	260
An exception with regard to the sea	ibid.
The variety and intricacy of trees	263
Those which are fullest of leaves, not always preferred by painters	263
The reasons	264
Plantations made for ornament, the least suited to the painter	265
The established trees of the country ought to prevail in the new plantations	266
Note	ibid.
Larches, and all pointed firs, make a bad general outline; and as they outgrow the oak, &c. nothing else appears	269
Fascinating deformity of a clump, compared to that of a wart or excrescence on the human face	272
Even large plantations of firs, have a harsh effect, from their not harmonizing with the natural woods of the country	273
The necessity of a proper balance in all scenery, both in point of form, and of colour	ibid.
One cause of the heaviness of fir plantations, is their closeness	274
Appearance of the outside of a close fir plantation—of the inside	275
Different appearance in a grove of spreading pines	276
Fir plantation improper for screens	277
A common hedge often a most effectual screen	279
This points out the necessity of a mixture of thorns, hollies and the lower growths, in all screens: likewise in ornamental plantations	ibid.
The advantage of such a mixture, if a plantation should be thinned after long neglect	280
Contrast of such a plantation, with a close wood of firs only ..	284
Its variety would not arise merely from a diversity of plants— variety in forests produced by a few species	286
Continual and unvaried diversity, a source and a species of monotony	287

CONTENTS.

xxvii

Accident and neglect the sources of variety in unimproved parks and forests	289
The reasons why lawns have so little variety.....	290
Why a lawn could hardly be made to look well in a picture....	291
Yet their peculiar character ought not be destroyed	292
Verdure and smoothness, which are the characteristic beauties of a lawn, are in their nature allied to monotony; but improvers instead of trying to lessen that defect, have added to it	ibid.
Soft and smooth colours, like soft and smooth sounds, are grateful to the mere sense: a relish for artful combinations, acquired by degrees	294
Such a relish does not exclude a taste for simple scenes, and simple melodies	295

CHAPTER III.

On the general effects of water in landscape	297
The beauty arising from reflections.....	298
None in Mr. Brown's made water	299
The turns of a beautiful natural river, compared with those of Mr. Brown's artificial rivers	300
Remarks on certain passages of the poets, respecting the banks of rivers; none of them applicable to those of Mr. Brown's artificial water	305
No professor has endeavoured to make an artificial like a natural river; though he would be proud of having it mistaken for one	311
Mr. Brown and his followers great economists of invention....	313
Cruelty of destroying the retired character of a brook. Regulus. Note.....	ibid.
Objects of reflection, peculiarly suited to stagnant water	315
Remarks on the expression of a fine <i>sheet</i> of water	ibid.
The great piece of water at Blenheim	317
The dressed bank and garden scenery: the reason why that part is superior to the other improved parts.....	319
Mr. Brown did not work in that part upon principle	320
He does not appear to have paid any attention to the thinning of his plantations.....	321

Anecdote of a lover of painting: two cows can never group.	
Note	322
Character of the water below the cascade at Blenheim.....	323

CONCLUDING CHAPTER.

General reflections on the subject of the Essay.....	325
Mr. Mason's poem, as real an attack on Mr. Brown's system, as what I have written	328
Something of patriotism in Mr. Mason's and Mr. Walpole's praises	331
Mr. Hamilton: Painshill	333
Precept of Tasso; comment upon it.....	334
Painting tends to humanize the mind.....	338
Tribute to the memory of a near relation	339
Anecdote of Sir Joshua Reynolds and Wilson. Note	ibid.
The true proser—an emblem of Mr. Brown's performances....	341
The opposite character—an emblem of the picturesque	342
He alone deserves the name of an improver who leaves, or cre- ates, the greatest number of pictures.....	345
But the sickening display of art, and the total want of effect tempts one to reverse the line of Tasso.....	346
Appendix.....	347
Notes and Illustrations.	371

ON THE
PICTURESQUE, &c.

THERE is no country, I believe (if we except China) where the art of laying out grounds is so much cultivated as it now is in England. Formerly the decorations near the house were infinitely more magnificent and expensive than they are at present; but the embellishments of what are called the grounds, and of all the extensive scenery round the place, were much less attended to; and, in general, the park, with all its timber and thickets, was left in a state of picturesque neglect. As these em-

bellishments are now extended over a whole district, and as they give a new and peculiar character to the general face of the country, it is well worth considering whether they give a natural and a beautiful one, and whether the present system of improving (to use a short though often an inaccurate term) is founded on any just principles of taste.

In order to examine this question, the first enquiry will naturally be, whether there is any standard, to which in point of grouping and of general composition, works of this sort can be referred; any authority higher than that of the persons who have gained the most general and popular reputation by those works, and whose method of conducting them has had the most extensive influence on the general taste? I think there is a standard; there are authorities of an infinitely higher kind; the authorities of those great artists who have most diligently studied the beauties of nature, both in their grandest and most general effects, and in their

minutest detail ; who have observed every variety of form and of colour ; have been able to select and combine, and then, by the magic of their art, to fix upon the canvas all these various beauties.

But, however highly I may think of the art of painting, compared with that of improving, nothing can be farther from my intention (and I wish to impress it in the strongest manner on the reader's mind) than to recommend the study of pictures in preference to that of nature, much less to the exclusion of it. Whoever studies art alone, will have a narrow pedantic manner of considering all objects, and of referring them solely to the minute and practical purposes of that art, whatever it be, to which his attention has been particularly directed: of this Mr. Brown's followers afford a very striking example ; and if it be right that every thing should be referred to art, at least let it be referred to one, whose variety, compared to the monotony of what is called improvement, appears infinite, but which again

falls as short of the boundless variety of the mistress of all art.

The use, therefore, of studying pictures, is not merely to make us acquainted with the combinations and effects that are contained in them, but to guide us, by means of those general heads (as they may be called) of composition, in our search of the numberless and untouched varieties and beauties of nature; for as he who studies art only will have a confined taste, so he who looks at nature only, will have a vague and unsettled one; and in this more extended sense I shall interpret the Italian proverb, "*Chi s'insegna, ha un pazzo per maestro*: He is a fool who does not profit by the experience of others."

We are therefore to profit by the experience contained in pictures, but not to content ourselves with that experience only; nor are we to consider even those of the highest class as absolute and infallible standards, but as the best and the only standards we have; as compositions, which, like those of the great classical authors, have

been consecrated by long uninterrupted admiration, and which therefore have a similar claim to influence our judgment, and to form our taste in all that is within their province. These are the reasons for studying *copies* of nature, though the *original* is before us, that we may not lose the benefit of what is of such great moment in all arts and sciences, the accumulated experience of past ages; and with respect to the art of improving, we may look upon pictures as a set of experiments of the different ways in which trees, buildings, water, &c. may be disposed, grouped, and accompanied, in the most beautiful and striking manner, and in every style, from the most simple and rural, to the grandest and most ornamental. Many of those objects, that are scarcely marked as they lie scattered over the face of nature, when brought together in the compass of a small space of canvas are forcibly impressed upon the eye, which by that means learns how to separate, to select, and combine.

Who can doubt whether Shakspeare and Fielding had not infinitely more amusement from society, in all its various views, than common observers? I believe it can be as little doubted, that the having read such authors must give any man, however acute his penetration, more enlarged views of human nature in general, as well as a more intimate acquaintance with particular characters, than he would have had from the observation of nature only; that many combinations of characters and of incidents, which might otherwise have escaped his notice, would forcibly strike him, from the recollection of scenes and passages in such writers; that in all these cases, the pleasure we receive from what passes in real life is rendered infinitely more poignant, by a resemblance to what we have read, or have seen on the stage. Such an observer will not divide what passes into scenes and chapters, and be pleased with it in proportion as it will do for a novel or a play, but he will be pleased on the same principles as Shakspeare or

Fielding would have been. The parallel that I wish to establish is very obvious: the works of genius in writing awaken and direct our attention towards many striking scenes and characters, which might otherwise escape us in real life, and the works of genius in painting point out to our notice a thousand effects and combinations of the happiest, though not of the most obvious kind, in real scenery.

Had the art of improving been cultivated for as long a time, and upon as settled principles as that of painting, and were there extant various works of genius, which, like those of the other art, had stood the test of ages (though from the great change which the growth and decay of trees must produce in the original design of the artist, this is hardly possible) there would not be the same necessity of referring and comparing the works of reality to those of imitation; but as the case stands at present, the only models of composition that approach to perfection, the only *fixed* and *unchanging* selections from the works of

nature united with those of art, are in the pictures and designs of the most eminent masters.

But although certain happy compositions, detached from the general mass of objects and considered by themselves, have the greatest and most lasting effect both in nature and painting; and though the painter, in respect to his own art, may think of those only, and give himself no concern about the rest, he cannot do so if he be an improver as well as a painter; for he might then neglect or injure what was essential to the whole, by attending only to a part. By this we may perceive a great and obvious difference between a painter who confines himself to his own profession, and one who should add to it that of an improver: the first would only have to observe what formed a single composition or picture, which he might transfer upon his canvas: the second must consider the whole range of scenery, in which, not only the most striking pictures or compositions are to be shewn to advantage, but where

all the intermediate parts, with all their bearings, relations, and connections, must be taken into the account. I have supposed, what I wish were oftener the case, a union of the two professions; for it can hardly be doubted, that he who can best select the happiest compositions from the general mass of objects, and knows the principles on which he makes those selections, must also be the best qualified, should he turn his thoughts that way, to arrange the connections throughout an extensive scenery. He likewise must be the most competent judge (and nothing in the whole art of improvement requires a nicer discrimination) where, and in what degree, some inferior beauties should be sacrificed, in order to give greater effect to those of a higher order. I am far from meaning by this, that every painter is capable of becoming an improver in the good sense of the word, but only such as to a liberal mind, join a strong feeling for nature as well as art, and have directed their attention to the arrange-

ment of real scenery; for there is a wide difference between looking at nature merely with a view to making pictures, and looking at pictures with a view to the improvement of our ideas of nature: the former often does contract the taste when pursued too closely; the latter I believe as generally refines and enlarges it. The greatest painters were men of enlarged and liberal minds, and well acquainted with many arts besides their own: L. da Vinci, M. Angelo, Raphael, Titian, were not merely patronised by the sovereigns of that period; they were considered almost as friends by such men as Leo, Francis, and Charles, and were intimately connected with Aretino, Castiglione, and all the eminent wits of that time. Those great artists (nor need I have gone so far back for examples) considered pictures and nature as throwing a reciprocal light on each other, and as connected with history, poetry, and all the fine arts; but the practice of too many lovers of painting has been very different, and has, I believe,

contributed in a great degree, and with great reason, to give a prejudice against the study of pictures as a preparation to that of nature. In the same manner that many painters consider natural scenery merely with a reference to their own practice, many connoisseurs consider pictures merely with a reference to other pictures, as a school in which they may learn the routine of connoisseurship; that is, an acquaintance with the most prominent marks and peculiarities of different masters: but they rarely look upon them in that point of view in which alone they can produce any real advantage,—as a school in which we may learn to enlarge, refine, and correct our ideas of nature, and in return, may qualify ourselves by this more liberal course of study, to be real judges of what is excellent in imitation. This reflection may account for what otherwise seems quite unaccountable; namely, that many enthusiastic admirers and collectors of Claude, Poussin, &c. should have suffered professed improvers to

deprive the general and extended scenery of their places, of all that those painters would have most admired and copied.

The great object of our present inquiry seems to be, what is that mode of study which will best enable a man of a liberal and intelligent mind, to judge of the forms, colours, effects, and combinations of visible objects: to judge of them either as single compositions, which may be considered by themselves without reference to what surrounds them; or else as parts of scenery, the arrangement of which must be more or less regulated and restrained by what joins them, and the connection of which with the general scenery must be constantly attended to. Such knowledge and judgment comprehend the whole science of improvement with regard to its effect on the eye; and I believe can never be perfectly acquired, unless to the study of natural scenery, and of the various styles of gardening at different periods, the improver adds the theory at least of that art, the very essence of which is connec-

tion: a principle of all others the most adapted to correct the chief defects of improvers. Connection is a principle always present to the painter's mind, if he deserve that name; and by the guidance of which he considers all sets of objects, whatever may be their character or boundaries, from the most extensive prospect to the most confined wood scene: neither referring every thing to the narrow limits of his canvas, nor despising what will not suit it, unless, indeed, the limits of his mind be equally narrow and contracted; for when I speak of a painter, I mean an artist, not a mechanic.

Whatever minute and partial objections may be made to the study of pictures for the purpose of improvement, (many of which I have discussed in my letter to Mr. Repton,) yet certainly the great leading principles of the one art,—as general composition—grouping the separate parts—harmony of tints—unity of character, are equally applicable to the other: I may add also, what is so very essential

to the painter, though at first sight it seems hardly within the province of the improver—breadth and effect of light and shade.

These are called the principles of painting, because that art has pointed them out more clearly, by separating what was most striking and well combined, from the less interesting and scattered objects of general scenery: but they are in reality the general principles on which the effect of all visible objects must depend, and to which it must be referred.

Nothing can be more directly at war with all these principles, founded as they are in truth and in nature, than the present system of laying out grounds. A painter, or whoever views objects with a painter's eye, looks with indifference, if not with disgust, at the clumps, the belts, the made water, and the eternal smoothness and sameness of a finished place. An improver, on the other hand, considers these as the most perfect embellishments, as the last finishing touches that nature

can receive from art; and consequently must think the finest composition of Claude, whom I mention as the most ornamented of all the great masters, comparatively rude and imperfect; though he probably might allow, in Mr. Brown's phrase, that it had "capabilities."

No one, I believe, has yet been daring enough to improve a picture of Claude*,

* The account in *Peregrine Pickle*, of the gentleman who had improved Vandyke's portraits of his ancestors, used to strike me as rather *outré*; but I met with a similar instance some years ago, that makes it appear much less so. I was looking at a collection of pictures with Gainsborough; among the rest the housekeeper shewed us a portrait of her master, which she said was by Sir Joshua Reynolds: we both stared, for not only the touch and the colouring, but the whole style of the drapery and the general effect had no resemblance to his manner. Upon examining the housekeeper more particularly, we discovered that her master had had every thing but the face—not re-touched from the colours having faded—but totally changed, and newly composed as well as painted, by another, and, I need not add, an inferior hand.

Such a man would have felt as little scruple in making a Claude like his own place, as in making his own portrait like a scare-crow.

or at least to acknowledge it; but I do not think it extravagant to suppose that a man, thoroughly persuaded, from his own taste, and from the authority of such a writer as Mr. Walpole, that an art unknown to every age and climate, that of creating landscapes, had advanced with master-steps to vigorous perfection; that enough had been done to establish such a school of landscape as cannot be found in the rest of the globe; and that Milton's description of Paradise seems to have been copied from some piece of modern gardening;—that such a man, full of enthusiasm for this new art, and with little veneration for that of painting, should chuse to shew the world what Claude might have been, had he had the advantage of seeing the works of Mr. Brown. The only difference he would make between improving a picture and a real scene, would be that of employing a painter instead of a gardener.

What would more immediately strike him would be the total want of that leading feature of all modern improvements,

the clump; and of course he would order several of them to be placed in the most open and conspicuous spots, with, perhaps, here and there a patch of larches, as forming a strong contrast in shape and colour, to the Scotch firs. His eye, which had been used to see even the natural groups of trees in improved places, made as separate and clump-like as possible, would be shocked to see those of Claude: some with their stems half concealed by bushes and thickets; others standing alone, but by means of those thickets, or of detached trees, connected with other groups of various sizes and shapes. All this rubbish must be totally cleared away, the ground made every where quite smooth and level, and each group left upon the grass perfectly distinct and separate.

Having been accustomed to whiten all distant buildings, those of Claude, from the effect of his soft vapoury atmosphere, would appear to him too indistinct; the painter of course would be ordered to give them a smarter appear-

ance, which might possibly be communicated to the nearer buildings also. Few modern houses or ornamental buildings are so placed among trees, and partially hidden by them, as to conceal much of the skill of the architect, or the expence of the possessor; but in Claude, not only ruins, but temples and palaces, are often so mixed with trees, that the tops overhang their balustrades, and the luxuriant branches shoot between the openings of their magnificent columns and porticos: as he would not suffer his own buildings to be so masked, neither would he those of Claude; and these luxuriant boughs, with all that obstructed a full view of them, the painter would be told to expunge, and carefully to restore the ornaments they had concealed.

The last finishing both to places and pictures is water. In Claude, it partakes of the general softness and dressed appearance of his scenes, and the accompaniments have, perhaps, less of rudeness than in any other master*; yet, compared with those of a

* One of my countrymen at Rome was observing, that the water in the Colonna Claude had rather too dressed

piece of made water, or of an improved river, his banks are perfectly savage; parts of them covered with trees and bushes that hang over the water; and near the edge of it tussucks of rushes, large stones, and stumps; the ground sometimes smooth, sometimes broken and abrupt, and seldom keeping for a long space, the same level from the water: no curves that answer each other; no resemblance, in short, to what the improver had been used to admire: a few strokes of the painter's brush would reduce the bank on each side to one level, to one green; would make curve answer curve, without bush or tree to hinder the eye from enjoying the uniform smoothness and verdure, and from pursuing

and artificial an appearance. A Frenchman, who was also looking at the picture, cried out, "Cependant, Monsieur, on pourroit y donner une si belle fête!" This was very characteristic of that gay nation, but it is equally so of a number of Claude's pictures. They have an *air de fête* beyond all others; and there is no painter whose works ought to be so much studied for highly dressed yet varied nature.

without interruption, the continued sweep of these serpentine lines;—a little cleaning and polishing of the fore-ground, would give the last touches of improvement, and complete the picture.

There is not a person in the smallest degree conversant with painting, who would not at the same time be shocked and diverted at the black spots and the white spots,—the naked water,—the naked buildings,—the scattered unconnected groups of trees, and all the gross and glaring violations of every principle of the art; and yet this, without any exaggeration, is the method in which many scenes worthy of Claude's pencil, have been improved. Is it then possible to imagine, that the beauties of imitation should be so distinct from those of reality, nay, so completely at variance, that what disgraces and makes a picture ridiculous, should become ornamental when applied to nature?

CHAPTER II.

IT seems to me that the neglect, which prevails in the works of modern improvers, of all that is picturesque, is owing to their exclusive attention to high polish and flowing lines; the charms of which they are so engaged in contemplating, that they overlook two of the most fruitful sources of human pleasure: the first, that great and universal source of pleasure, *variety*---the power of which is independent of beauty, but without which even beauty itself soon ceases to please; the second, *intricacy*---a quality which, though distinct from variety,

is so connected and blended with it, that the one can hardly exist without the other.

According to the idea I have formed of it, intricacy in landscape might be defined, *that disposition of objects, which, by a partial and uncertain concealment, excites and nourishes curiosity**. Variety can hardly require a definition, though from the practice of many layers-out of ground, one might suppose it did. Upon the whole, it appears to me, that as intricacy in the disposition, and variety in the forms, the tints, and the lights and shadows of objects, are

* Many persons, who take little concern in the intricacy of oaks, beeches, and thorns, may feel the effects of partial concealment in more interesting objects, and may have experienced how differently the passions are moved by an open licentious display of beauties, and by the unguarded disorder which sometimes escapes the care of modesty, and which coquetry so successfully imitates :

Parte appar delle mamme acerbe & crude,
 Parte altrui ne ricuopre invida veste;
 Invida sì, ma se agli occhi il varco chiude,
 L'amoroso pensier già non s'arresta.

the great characteristics of picturesque scenery; so monotony and baldness, are the great defects of improved places.

Nothing would place this in so distinct a point of view, as a comparison between some familiar scene in its natural and picturesque state, and in that which would be its improved state according to the present mode of gardening. All painters who have imitated the more confined scenes of nature, have been fond of making studies from old neglected bye roads and hollow ways; and perhaps there are few spots that in so small a compass, have a greater variety of that sort of beauty called picturesque; but, I believe, the instances are very rare of painters, who have turned out volunteers into a gentleman's walk or drive, either when made between artificial banks, or when the natural sides or banks have been improved. I shall endeavour to examine whence it happens, that a painter looks coldly on what is very generally admired, and discovers a thousand

interesting objects, where an improver passes on with indifference, if not with disgust.

Perhaps what is most immediately striking in a lane of this kind is its intricacy. Any winding road, indeed, especially where there are banks, must necessarily have some degree of intricacy; but in a dressed lane every effort of art seems directed against that disposition of the ground: the sides are so regularly sloped, so regularly planted, and the space, when there is any, between them and the road, so uniformly levelled; the sweeps of the road so plainly artificial, the verges of grass that bound it so nicely edged; the whole, in short, has such an appearance of having been made by a receipt, that curiosity, that most active principle of pleasure, is almost extinguished.

But in hollow lanes and bye roads, all the leading features, and a thousand circumstances of detail, promote the natural intricacy of the ground: the turns are sud-

den and unprepared; the banks sometimes broken and abrupt; sometimes smooth, and gently, but not uniformly sloping; now wildly over-hung with thickets of trees and bushes; now loosely skirted with wood: no regular verge of grass, no cut edges, no distinct lines of separation; all is mixed and blended together, and the border of the road itself, shaped by the mere tread of passengers and animals, is as unconstrained as the footsteps that formed it. Even the tracks of the wheels (for no circumstance is indifferent) contribute to the picturesque effect of the whole: the varied lines they describe just mark the way among trees and bushes; often some obstacle, a cluster of low thorns, a furze-bush, a tussuck, a large stone, forces the wheels into sudden and intricate turns; often a group of trees or a thicket, occasions the road to separate into two parts, leaving a sort of island in the middle.

These are a few of the picturesque accidents, which in lanes and bye roads attract

the notice of painters. In many scenes of that kind, the varieties of form, of colour, and of light and shade, which present themselves at every step, are numberless; and it is a singular circumstance that some of the most striking among them should be owing to the indiscriminate hacking of the peasant, nay, to the very decay that is occasioned by it. When opposed to the tameness of the poor pinioned trees (whatever their age) of a gentleman's plantation drawn up strait and even together, there is often a sort of spirit and animation, in the manner in which old neglected pollards stretch out their limbs quite across these hollow roads, in every wild and irregular direction: on some, the large knots and protuberances, add to the ruggedness of their twisted trunks; in others, the deep hollow of the inside, the mosses on the bark, the rich yellow of the touch-wood, with the blackness of the more decayed substance, afford such variety of tints, of brilliant and mellow lights, with deep and peculiar

shades, as the finest timber tree, however beautiful in other respects, with all its health and vigour cannot exhibit.

This careless method of cutting, just as the farmer happened to want a few stakes or poles, gives infinite variety to the general outline of the banks. Near to one of these "unwedgeable and gnarled oaks," often rises the slender elegant form of a young beech, ash, or birch, that had escaped the axe, whose tender bark and light foliage appear still more delicate and airy, when seen sideways against the rough bark and massy head of the oak: sometimes it rises alone from the bank; sometimes from amidst a cluster of rich hollies or wild junipers; sometimes its light and upright stem is embraced by the projecting cedar-like boughs of the yew.

The ground itself in these lanes, is as much varied in form, tint, and light and shade, as the plants that grow upon it; this, as usual, instead of owing any thing to art, is, on the contrary, occasioned by accident

or drive, after a sheep track or a cart rut, though very useful hints may be taken from them both; and without having water-docks or thistles before one's door, their effect in a painter's fore-ground may be produced by plants that are considered as ornamental. I am equally persuaded that a dressed appearance might be given to one of these lanes, without destroying its peculiar and characteristic beauties.

I have said little of the superior variety and effect of light and shade in scenes of this kind, as they of course must follow variety of forms and of masses, and intricacy of disposition: I wished to avoid all detail that did not appear to me necessary to explain or illustrate some general principles; but when general principles are put crudely without examples, they not only are dry, but obscure, and make no impression.

There are several ways in which a spot of this kind near a gentleman's place, would probably be improved; for even in the monotony of what is called improve-

ment, there is a variety of bad. Some, perhaps, would cut down the old pollards, clear the rubbish, and leave only the maiden trees standing; some might plant up the whole; others grub up every thing, and make a shrubbery on each side; others put clumps of shrubs, or of firs; but there is one improvement which I am afraid almost all who had not been used to look at objects with a painter's eye would adopt, and which alone would entirely destroy its character; that is smoothing and levelling the ground. The moment this mechanical common-place operation, by which Mr. Brown and his followers have gained so much credit, is begun, adieu to all that the painter admires—to all intricacies, to all the beautiful varieties of form, tint, and light and shade; every deep recess---every bold projection---the fantastic roots of trees---the winding paths of sheep---all must go; in a few hours, the rash hand of false taste completely demolishes, what time only, and a thousand lucky accidents can mature, so as to make it become

the admiration and study of a Ruysdal or a Gainsborough; and reduces it to such a thing, as an Oilman in Thames-street may at any time contract for by the yard at Islington or Mile-End.

I had lately an opportunity of observing the progress of improvement in one lane, and the effect of it in another, both unfortunately bordering on gentlemen's pleasure grounds. The first had on one side a high bank full of the beauties I have described; I was particularly struck with a beech which stood single on one part of it, and with the effect and character which its spreading roots gave, both to the bank and to the tree itself: the sheep also had made their sidelong paths to this spot, and often lay in the little compartments between the roots. One day I found a great many labourers wheeling mould to this place; by degrees they filled up all inequalities, and completely covered the roots and pathways; one would have supposed they were working for my Uncle Toby, under the

direction of Corporal Trim*, for they had converted this varied bank into a perfect glacis, only the gazons were omitted. They had however worked up the mould they had wheeled into a sort of a mortar, and had laid it as smooth from top to bottom as a mason could have done with his trowel. From the number of men employed, the

* These worthy pioneers, their employment, and their employers, are very aptly described in two verses of Tasso, and especially if the word *guastatori** be taken in its most obvious sense :

Inanzi i guastatori avea mandati,
I vuoti luoghi empir', & spianar gli erti.

This is a most complete receipt for spoiling a picturesque spot; and one might suppose, from this military style having been so generally adopted, and every thing laid open, that our improvers are fearful of an enemy being in ambuscade among the bushes of a gravel pit, or lurking in some intricate group of trees. In that respect, it must be owned, the clump has infinite merit; for it may be reconnoitred from every point, and seen through in every direction.

* Spoilers.

quantity of earth wheeled, and the nicety with which this operation was performed, I am persuaded it was in a great measure done for the sake of beauty.

The improved part of the other lane I never saw in its original state; but by what remains untouched, and by the accounts I heard, it must have afforded noble studies for a painter. The banks are higher and the trees are larger than in the other lane, and their branches, stretching from side to side,

“ High over arch'd imbower.”

I heard a vast deal from the gardener of the place near it, about the large ugly roots that appeared above ground, the large holes the sheep used to lie in, and the rubbish of all kinds that used to grow about them. The last possessor took care to fill up and clean, as far as his property went; and that every thing might look regular, he put, as a boundary to the road, a row of white

pales at the foot of the bank on each side, and on that next his house he raised a peat wall as upright as it could well stand, by way of a facing to the old bank, and in the middle of this peat wall, planted a row of laurels: this row the gardener used to cut quite flat at top, and the cattle reaching over the pales, and browsing the lower shoots within their bite, kept it as even at bottom; so that it formed one projecting lump in the middle, and had just as picturesque an appearance as a bushy wig squeezed between the hat and the cape. I should add, that these two specimens of dressed lanes are not in a distant county, but within thirty miles of London, and in a district full of expensive embellishments.

I am afraid many of my readers will think that I have been a long while getting through these lanes; but in them, in old quarries, and long neglected chalk and gravel pits, a great deal of what constitutes, and what destroys picturesque beauty, is

strongly exemplified within a small compass, and in spots easily resorted to; the causes too are as clearly marked, and may be as successfully studied, as where the higher styles of it, often mixed with the sublime, are displayed among forests, rocks, and mountains.

CHAPTER III.

THERE are few words, whose meaning has been less accurately determined than that of the word picturesque.

In general, I believe, it is applied to every object, and every kind of scenery, which has been, or might be represented with good effect in painting; just as the word beautiful (when we speak of visible nature) is applied to every object, and every kind of scenery, that in any way give pleasure to the eye; and these seem to be the significations of both words, taken in their most extended and popular sense. A

more precise and distinct idea of beauty has been given in an essay, the early splendor of which, not even the full meridian blaze of its illustrious author has been able to extinguish; but the picturesque, considered as a separate character, has never yet been accurately distinguished from the sublime, and the beautiful; though as no one has ever pretended that they are synonymous, (for it is sometimes used in contradistinction to them) such a distinction must exist.

Mr. Gilpin, from whose very ingenious and extensive observations on this subject I have received great pleasure and instruction, appears to have adopted this common acceptation, not merely as such, but as giving an exact and determinate idea of the word; for he defines picturesque objects to be those "which please from some quality capable of being illustrated in painting*," or, as he again

* Essay on Picturesque Beauty, page 1.

defines it in his Letter to Sir Joshua Reynolds "such objects as are proper subjects " for painting*." Both these definitions seem to me (what may perhaps appear a contradiction) at once too vague, and too confined; for though we are not to expect any definition to be so accurate and comprehensive, as both to supply the place, and stand the test of investigation, yet if it do not in some degree separate the thing defined from all others, it differs little from any general truth on the same subject. For instance, it is very true that picturesque objects do please from some quality capable of being illustrated in painting; but so also does every object that is represented in painting if it please at all, otherwise it would not have been painted: and hence we ought to conclude, what certainly is not meant, that all objects which please in pictures are therefore picturesque; for no distinction or exclusion is made. Were

* End of Essay on Picturesque Beauty, page 36.

any other person to define picturesque objects to be those which please from some striking effect of form, colour, or light and shadow,---such a definition would indeed give but a very indistinct idea of the thing defined; but it would be hardly more vague, and at the same time much less confined than the others, for it would not have an exclusive reference to a particular art.

I hope to shew in the course of this work, that the picturesque has a character not less separate and distinct than either the sublime or the beautiful, nor less independent of the art of painting. It has indeed been pointed out and illustrated by that art, and is one of its most striking ornaments; but has not beauty been pointed out and illustrated by that art also, nay, according to the poet, brought into existence by it?

*Si Venerem Cous nunquam posuisset Apelles,
Mersa sub æquoreis illa lateret aquis.*

Examine the forms of the early Italian

painters, or of those, who, at a later period, lived where the study of the antique, then fully operating at Rome on minds highly prepared for its influence, had not yet taught them to separate what is beautiful, from the general mass: you might almost conclude that beauty did not then exist; yet those painters were capable of exact imitation, though not of selection. Examine *grandeur* of form in the same manner; look at the dry, meagre forms of Albert Durer, a man of genius even in Raphael's estimation; of Pietro Perugino, Andrea Mantegna, &c. and compare them with those of M. Angelo and Raphael: nature was not more dry and meagre in Germany or Perugia than at Rome. Compare their landscapes and back grounds with those of Titian; nature was not changed, but a mind of a higher cast, and instructed by the experience of all who had gone before, rejected minute detail; and pointed out, by means of such selections, and such combinations as were congenial to its own sub-

lime conceptions, in what forms, in what colours, and in what effects, grandeur in landscape consisted. Can it then be doubted that grandeur and beauty have been pointed out and illustrated by painting as well as picturesqueness*? Yet, would it be a just definition of sublime or of beautiful objects, to say that they were such (and, let the words be taken in their most liberal construction) as *pleased from some quality capable of being illustrated in painting, or, that were proper subjects for that art?* The ancients, indeed, not only referred beauty of *form* to painting, but even beauty of *colour*; and the poet who could describe his mistress's complexion, by comparing it to the tints of Apelles's pictures, must have thought that beauty of

* I have ventured to make use of this word, which I believe does not occur in any writer, from what appeared to me the necessity of having some one word to oppose to beauty and sublimity, in a work where they are so often compared.

every kind was highly illustrated by the art to which he referred.

The principles of those two leading characters in nature, the sublime and the beautiful, have been fully illustrated and discriminated by a great master; but even when I first read that most original work, I felt that there were numberless objects which give great delight to the eye, and yet differ as widely from the beautiful, as from the sublime. The reflections which I have since been led to make, have convinced me that these objects form a distinct class, and belong to what may properly be called the picturesque.

That term, as we may judge from its etymology, is applied only to objects of sight; and indeed in so confined a manner, as to be supposed merely to have a reference to the art from which it is named. I am well convinced, however, that the name and reference only are limited and uncertain, and that the qualities which make objects picturesque, are not only as dis-

tinct as those which make them beautiful or sublime, but are equally extended to all our sensations by whatever organs they are received; and that music (though it appears like a solecism) may be as truly picturesque, according to the general principles of picturesqueness, as it may be beautiful or sublime, according to those of beauty or sublimity.

But there is one circumstance particularly adverse to this part of my essay; I mean the manifest derivation of the word picturesque. The Italian *pittresco* is, I imagine, of earlier date than either the English or the French word, the latter of which, *pittresque*, is clearly taken from it, having, no analogy to its own tongue. *Pittresco* is derived, not like picturesque, from the thing painted, but from the painter; and this difference is not wholly immaterial. The English word refers to the performance, and the objects most suited to it: the Italian and French words have a reference to the turn of mind common to painters;

who, from the constant habit of examining all the peculiar effects and combinations, as well as the general appearance of nature, are struck with numberless circumstances, even where they are incapable of being represented, to which an unpractised eye pays little or no attention. The English word naturally draws the reader's mind towards pictures; and from that partial and confined view of the subject, what is in truth only an illustration of picturesqueness, becomes the foundation of it. The words sublime and beautiful have not the same etymological reference to any one visible art, and therefore are applied to objects of the other senses: sublime indeed, in the language from which it is taken, and in its plain sense, means high, and therefore, perhaps, in strictness, should relate to objects of sight only; yet we no more scruple to call one of Handel's chorusses, sublime, than Corelli's famous *pastorale* beautiful. But should any person simply, and without any qualifying expressions,

call a capricious movement of Scarlatti or Haydn *picturesque*, he would, with great reason, be laughed at, for it is not a term applied to sounds; yet such a movement, from its sudden, unexpected, and abrupt transitions,---from a certain playful wildness of character and appearance of irregularity, is no less analogous to similar scenery in nature, than the concerto or the chorus, to what is grand or beautiful to the eye.

There is, indeed, a general harmony and correspondence in all our sensations when they arise from similar causes, though they affect us by means of different senses; and these causes, as Mr. Burke has admirably pointed out*, can never be so clearly ascertained when we confine our observations to one sense only.

I must here observe, and I wish the reader to keep it in his mind, that the inquiry is not in what sense certain words are used in the best authors, still less what

* Sublime and beautiful, page 236.

is their common, and vulgar use, and abuse; but whether there be certain qualities, which uniformly produce the same effects in all visible objects, and, according to the same analogy, in objects of hearing and of all the other senses; and which qualities, though frequently blended and united with others in the same object or set of objects, may be separated from them, and assigned to the class to which they belong.

. If it can be shewn that a character composed of these qualities, and distinct from all others, does universally prevail; if it can be traced in the different objects of art and of nature, and appears consistent throughout,—it surely deserves a distinct title; but with respect to the real ground of inquiry, it matters little whether such a character, or the set of objects belonging to it, be called beautiful, sublime, or picturesque, or by any other name, or by no name at all.

Beauty is so much the most enchanting

and popular quality, that it is often applied as the highest commendation to whatever gives us pleasure, or raises our admiration, be the cause what it will. Mr. Burke has given several instances of these ill-judged applications, and of the confusion of ideas which result from them; but there is nothing more ill-judged, or more likely to create confusion, if we at all agree with Mr. Burke in his idea of beauty, than the mode which prevails of joining together two words of a different, and in some respects of an opposite meaning, and calling the character by the title of Picturesque Beauty.

I must observe, however, that I by no means object to the expression itself; I only object to it as a general term for the *character*, and as comprehending every kind of scenery, and every set of objects which look well in a picture. That is the sense, as far as I have observed, in which it is very commonly used; consequently, an old hovel, an old cart horse, or an old

woman, are often, in that sense, full of picturesque *beauty*; and certainly the application of the last term to such objects, must tend to confuse our ideas: but were the expression restrained to those objects only, in which the picturesque and the beautiful are mixed together, and so mixed, that the result, according to common apprehension, is beautiful; and were it never used when the picturesque (as it no less frequently happens) is mixed solely with what is terrible, ugly, or deformed, I should highly approve of the expression, and wish for more distinctions of the same kind.

In reality, the picturesque not only differs from the beautiful in those qualities which Mr. Burke has so justly ascribed to it, but arises from qualities the most diametrically opposite.

According to Mr. Burke, one of the most essential qualities of beauty is smoothness: now as the perfection of smoothness is absolute equality and uniformity of surface, wherever that prevails there can be but little variety or intricacy; as, for in-

stance, in smooth level banks, on a small, or in open downs, on a large scale. Another essential quality of beauty is gradual variation; that is (to make use of Mr. Burke's expression) where the lines do not vary in a sudden and broken manner, and where there is no sudden protuberance: it requires but little reflection to perceive, that the exclusion of all but flowing lines cannot promote variety; and that sudden protuberances, and lines that cross each other in a sudden and broken manner, are among the most fruitful causes of intricacy.

I am therefore persuaded, that the two opposite qualities of roughness*, and of sudden variation, joined to that of irregu-

* I have followed Mr. Gilpin's example in using roughness as a general term; he observes, however, that, "properly speaking, roughness relates only to the *surface* of bodies; and that when we speak of their *delineation* we use the word ruggedness." In making roughness, in this general sense, a very principal distinction between the beautiful and the picturesque, I believe I am supported by the general opinion of all who have considered the subject, as well as by Mr. Gilpin's authority.

larity, are the most efficient causes of the picturesque.

This, I think, will appear very clearly, if we take a view of those objects, both natural and artificial, that are allowed to be picturesque, and compare them with those which are as generally allowed to be beautiful.

A temple or palace of Grecian architecture in its perfect entire state, and with its surface and colour smooth and even, either in painting or reality is beautiful; in ruin it is picturesque. Observe the process by which time, the great author of such changes, converts a beautiful object into a picturesque one. First, by means of weather stains, partial incrustations, mosses, &c. it at the same time takes off from the uniformity of the surface, and of the colour; that is, gives a degree of roughness, and variety of tint. Next, the various accidents of weather loosen the stones themselves; they tumble in irregular masses, upon what was perhaps smooth turf or pavement, or nicely trimmed walks and

shrubberies; now mixed and overgrown with wild plants and creepers, that crawl over, and shoot among the fallen ruins. Sedums, wall-flowers, and other vegetables that bear drought, find nourishment in the decayed cement from which the stones have been detached: birds convey their food into the chinks, and yew, elder, and other berried plants project from the sides; while the ivy mantles over other parts, and crowns the top. The even, regular lines of the doors and windows are broken, and through their ivy-fringed openings is displayed in a more broken and picturesque manner, that striking image in Virgil,

*Apparet domus intus, & atria longa patescunt;
Apparent Priami & veterum penetralia regum.*

Gothic architecture is generally considered as more picturesque, though less beautiful than Grecian; and upon the same principle that a ruin is more so than a new edifice. The first thing that strikes the eye in approaching any building, is the general outline, and the effect of the openings: in Grecian buildings, the general

lines of the roof are strait; and even when varied and adorned by a dome or a pediment, the whole has a character of symmetry and regularity. But symmetry, which, in works of art particularly, accords with the beautiful, is in the same degree adverse to the picturesque; and among the various causes of the superior picturesqueness of ruins compared with entire buildings, the destruction of symmetry is by no means the least powerful.

In Gothic buildings, the outline of the summit presents such a variety of forms, of turrets and pinnacles, some open, some fretted and variously enriched, that even where there is an exact correspondence of parts, it is often disguised by an appearance of splendid confusion and irregularity*. In the doors and windows of Gothic churches, the pointed arch has as

* There is a line in Dryden's *Palamon and Arcite*, which might be interpreted according to this idea, though I do not suppose he intended to convey any such meaning;

"And all appeared irregularly great."

much variety as any regular figure can well have: the eye too is less strongly conducted, than by the parallel lines in the Grecian style, from the top of one aperture to that of another: and every person must be struck with the extreme richness and intricacy of some of the principal windows of our cathedrals and ruined abbeys. In these last is displayed the triumph of the picturesque; and their charms to a painter's eye are often so great, as to rival those which arise from the chaste ornaments, and the noble and elegant simplicity of Grecian architecture.

Some people may, perhaps, be unwilling to allow, that in ruins of Grecian and Gothic architecture, any considerable part of the spectator's pleasure arises from the picturesque circumstances; and may choose to attribute the whole, to what may justly claim a great share in that pleasure—the elegance or grandeur of their forms—the veneration of high antiquity—or the solemnity of religious awe; in a word, to the mixture of the two other characters. But

were this true, yet there are many buildings highly interesting to all who have united the study of art with that of nature, in which beauty and grandeur are equally out of the question; such as hovels, cottages, mills, insides of old barns, stables, &c. whenever they have any marked and peculiar effect of form, tint, or light and shadow. In mills particularly, such is the extreme intricacy of the wheels and the wood work; such the singular variety of forms and of lights and shadows, of mosses and weather stains from the constant moisture, of plants springing from the rough joints of the stones; such the assemblage of every thing which most conduces to picturesqueness, that even without the addition of water, an old mill has the greatest charm for a painter.

It is owing to the same causes, that a building with scaffolding has often a more picturesque appearance, than the building itself when the scaffolding is taken away; that old, mossy, rough-hewn park pales of

unequal heights are an ornament to landscape, especially when they are partially concealed by thickets; while a neat post and rail, regularly continued round a field, and seen without any interruption, is one of the most unpicturesque, as being one of the most uniform of all boundaries.

But among all the objects of nature, there is none in which roughness and smoothness more strongly mark the distinction between the two characters, than in water. A calm, clear lake, with the reflections of all that surrounds it, viewed under the influence of a setting sun, at the close of an evening clear and serene as its own surface, is perhaps, of all scenes, the most congenial to our ideas of beauty in its strictest, and in its most general acceptation.

Nay though the scenery around should be the most wild and picturesque (I might almost say the most savage) every thing is so softened and melted together by the reflection of such a mirror, that the prevailing idea, even then, might possibly be that

of beauty, so long as the water itself was chiefly regarded. On the other hand, all water of which the surface is broken, and the motion abrupt and irregular, as universally accords with our ideas of the picturesque; and whenever the word is mentioned, rapid and stony torrents and waterfalls, and waves dashing against rocks, are among the first objects that present themselves to our imagination. The two characters also approach and balance each other, as roughness or smoothness, as gentle undulation or abruptness prevail.

Among trees, it is not the smooth young beech, nor the fresh and tender ash, but the rugged old oak, or knotty wych elm that are picturesque: nor is it necessary they should be of great bulk; it is sufficient if they are rough, mossy, with a character of age, and with sudden variations in their forms. The limbs of huge trees shattered by lightning or tempestuous winds, are in the highest degree picturesque; but whatever is caused by those dreaded powers of

destruction, must always have a tincture of the sublime*.

If we next take a view of those animals that are called picturesque, the same qualities will be found to prevail. The ass is generally thought to be more picturesque than the horse; and among horses, it is the wild and rough forester, or the worn-out cart-horse to which that title is applied. The sleek pampered steed, with his

* There is a simile in Ariosto, in which the two characters are finely united:

Quale stordito, et stupido aratore,
 Poi ch'e passato il fulmine, si leva
 Di la, dove l'altissimo fragore
 Presso agli uccisi buoi steso l'aveva;
 Che mira senza fronde, et senza onore,
 Il Pin che da lontan veder soleva,
 Tal si levo'l Pagano.

Milton seems to have thought of this simile; but the sublimity both of his subject and of his own genius, made him reject those picturesque circumstances, the variety of which, while it amuses, distracts the mind, and has kept it fixed on a few grand and awful images:

As when heaven's fire
 Has scath'd the forest oaks, or mountain pines,
 With singed top their stately growth tho' bare,
 Stands on the blasted heath.

high arched crest and flowing mane, is frequently represented in painting; but his prevailing character, whether there, or in reality, is that of beauty.

In pursuing the same mode of inquiry with respect to other animals, we find that the Pomeranian, and the rough water-dog, are more picturesque than the smooth spaniel, or the greyhound; the shaggy goat than the sheep: and these last are more so when their fleeces are ragged and worn away in parts, than when they are of equal thickness, or when they have lately been shorn. No animal indeed is so constantly introduced in landscape as the sheep, but that, as I observed before, does not prove superior picturesqueness; and I imagine, that besides their innocent character, so suited to pastoral scenes of which they are the natural inhabitants, it arises from their being of a tint at once brilliant and mellow, which unites happily with all objects; and also from their producing when in groups, however slightly the detail may be expressed, broader masses of light and shadow than any other animal. The

reverse of this is true with regard to deer: their general effect in groups, is comparatively meagre and spotty; but their wild appearance, their lively action, their sudden bounds, and the intricacy of their branching horns, are circumstances in the highest degree picturesque.

Wild and savage animals, like scenes of the same description, have generally a marked and picturesque character: and as such scenes are less strongly impressed with that character when all is calm and serene, than when the clouds are agitated and variously tossed about, so whatever may be the appearance of any animal in a tranquil state, it becomes more picturesque, when suddenly altered by the influence of some violent emotion; and it is curious to observe how all that disturbs inward calm, produces a correspondent roughness without. The bristles of the chafed and foaming boar—the quills on the fretful porcupine—are suddenly raised by sudden emotion; and the angry lion exhibits the same picturesque marks of rage and fierceness,

Παν δὲ τ' ἐπισχυνὸν κατὰ ἔλκεται ὁδὸν καλοῦσιν.

It is true that in all animals, where great strength and destructive fierceness are united, there is a mixture of grandeur; but the principles on which a greater or lesser degree of picturesqueness is founded, may clearly be distinguished: the lion, for instance, with his shaggy mane, is much more picturesque than the lioness, though she is equally an object of terror.

The effect of smoothness or roughness in producing the beautiful or the picturesque, is again clearly exemplified in birds. Nothing is more truly consonant to our ideas of beauty, than their plumage when smooth and undisturbed, and when the eye glides over it without interruption: nothing, on the other hand, has so picturesque an appearance as their feathers, when ruffled by any accidental circumstance, or by any sudden passion in the animal. When inflamed with anger or with desire, the first symptoms appear in their ruffled plumage: the game cock, when he attacks his rival, raises the feathers of his neck; the purple pheasant his crest; and the peacock, when he feels the return

of spring, shews his passion in the same manner,

And every feather shivers with delight.

The picturesque character in birds of prey, arises from the angular form of their beak, the rough feathers on their legs, their crooked talons, their action and energy. All these circumstances are in the strongest degree apparent in the eagle; but from his size as well as courage, from the force of his beak and talons, formidable even to man, and likewise from all our earliest associations, the bird of Jove is always very much connected with ideas of grandeur.

Many birds have received from nature the same picturesque appearance, which in others happens only accidentally: such are those whose heads and necks are adorned with ruffs, with crests, and with tufts of plumes; not lying smoothly over each other as those of the back, but loosely and irregularly disposed. These are, perhaps, the most striking and attractive of all birds, as having that degree of roughness and irregularity, which gives a spirit

to smoothness and symmetry; and where in them, or in other objects these last qualities prevail, the result of the whole is justly called beautiful.

In our own species, objects merely picturesque are to be found among the wandering tribes of gypsies and beggars; who in all the qualities which give them that character, bear a close analogy to the wild forester and the worn out cart-horse, and again to old mills, hovels, and other inanimate objects of the same kind.—More dignified characters, such as a Belisarius, or a Marius in age and exile*, have the same mixture of picturesqueness and of decayed grandeur, as the venerable remains of the magnificence of past ages.

If we ascend to the highest order of created beings, as painted by the grandest of our poets, they, in their state of glory and happiness, raise no ideas but those of beauty and sublimity; the picturesque, as

* The noble picture of Salvator Rosa at Lord Townshend's, which in the print is called Belisarius, has been thought to be a Marius among the ruins of Carthage.

in earthly objects, only shews itself when they are in a state of ruin*; when shadows have obscured their original brightness, and that uniform, though angelic expression of pure love and joy, has been destroyed by a variety of warring passions:

Darken'd so, yet shone
Above them all the archangel; but his face
Deep scars of thunder had entrench'd, and care
Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows
Of dauntless courage and considerate pride
Waiting revenge; cruel his eye, but cast
Signs of remorse and passion

If from nature we turn to that art from which the expression itself is taken, we shall find all the principles of picturesqueness confirmed. Among painters, Salvator Rosa is one of the most remarkable for his picturesque effects: in no other master are seen such abrupt and rugged forms, such sudden deviations both in his figures and his landscapes; and the roughness and broken touches of his pencilling, admira-

* Nor appear'd
Less than archangel ruin'd, and the excess
Of glory obscured.

bly accord with the objects they characterise.

Guido, on the other hand, was as eminent for beauty: in his celestial countenances are the happiest examples of gradual variation, of lines that melt and flow into each other; no sudden break, nothing that can disturb that pleasing languor, which the union of all that constitutes beauty impresses on the soul. The style of his hair is as smooth, as its own character, and its effect in accompanying the face will allow; the flow of his drapery, the sweetness and equality of his pencilling, and the silvery clearness and purity of his tints, are all examples of the justness of Mr. Burke's principles of beauty. But we may learn from the works even of this great master, how unavoidably an attention to mere beauty and flow of outline, will lead towards sameness and insipidity. If this has happened to a painter of such high excellence, who so well knew the value of all that belongs to his art, and whose touch, when he painted a St. Peter

or a St. Jerome, was as much admired for its spirited and characteristic roughness, as for its equality and smoothness in his angels and madonnas,—what must be the case with men who have been tethered all their lives in a clump or a belt?

There is another instance of contrast between two eminent painters, Albano and Mola, which I cannot forbear mentioning, as it confirms the alliance between roughness and picturesqueness, and between smoothness and beauty; and as it shews, in the latter case, the consequent danger of sameness. Of all the painters who have left behind them a high reputation, none perhaps, was more uniformly smooth than Albano, or less often deviated into abruptness of any kind: none also have greater monotony of character; but, from the extreme beauty and delicacy of his forms and his tints, and his exquisite finishing, few pictures are more generally captivating. Mola, the scholar of Albano, (and that circumstance makes it more singular) is as remarkable for many of those opposite

qualities which distinguish S. Rosa, though he has not the boldness and animation of that original genius. There is hardly any painter, whose pictures more immediately catch the eye of a connoisseur than those of Mola, or less attract the notice of a person unused to painting. Salvator has a savage grandeur, often in the highest degree sublime; and sublimity in any shape, will command attention: but Mola's scenes and figures, are for the most part neither sublime nor beautiful; they are purely picturesque: his touch is less rough than Salvator's; his colouring has, in general, more richness and variety; and his pictures seem to me the most perfect examples of the higher stile of picturesqueness: infinitely removed from vulgar nature, but having neither the softness and delicacy of beauty, nor that grandeur of conception which produces the sublime.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM all that has been stated in the last chapter, picturesqueness appears to hold a station between beauty and sublimity; and on that account, perhaps, is more frequently, and more happily blended with them both, than they are with each other. It is, however, perfectly distinct from either. Beauty and picturesqueness are indeed evidently founded on very opposite qualities; the one on smooth-

ness, the other on roughness; the one on gradual, the other on sudden variation; the one on ideas of youth and freshness, the other on those of age, and even of decay.

But as most of the qualities of visible beauty are made known to us through the medium of another sense, the sight itself is hardly more to be considered than the touch, in regard to all those sensations which are excited by beautiful forms; and the distinction between the beautiful and the picturesque, will, perhaps, be most strongly pointed out by means of the latter sense. I am aware that this is liable to a gross and obvious ridicule; but for that reason, none but gross and commonplace minds will dwell upon it.

Mr. Burke has observed, that "men are carried to the sex in general, as it is the sex, and by the common law of nature; but they are attached to particulars by personal *beauty*;" he adds, "I call beauty a social quality; for where women and

men, and not only they, but when other animals give us a sense of joy and pleasure in beholding them (and there are many that do so) they inspire us with sentiments of tenderness and affection towards their persons; we like to have them near us, and we enter willingly into a kind of relation with them*.”

These sentiments of tenderness and affection, nature has taught us to express by caresses, by gentle pressure; these are the endearments we make use of, where sex is totally out of the question, to beautiful children, to beautiful animals, and even to things inanimate; and where the size and character, as in trees, buildings, &c. exclude any such relation, still something of the same difference of impression between them and rugged objects appears to subsist; that impression, however, is diminished, as the size of any beautiful object is increased; and as it approaches towards

* Sublime and Beautiful, p. 66.

grandeur and magnificence, it recedes from loveliness.

As the eye borrows many of its sensations from the touch, so that again seems to borrow others from the sight. Soft, fresh, and beautiful colours, though “not sensible to feeling as to sight,” give us an inclination to try their effect on the touch; whereas, if the colour be not beautiful, that inclination, I believe, is always diminished; and, in objects merely picturesque, and void of all beauty, is rarely excited*.

It has been observed in a former part, that symmetry, which perfectly accords with the beautiful, is in the same degree adverse to the picturesque; and this circumstance forms a strongly marked distinction between the

* I have read, indeed, in some fairy tale, of a country, where age and wrinkles were loved and caressed, and youth and freshness neglected; but in real life, I fancy, the most picturesque old woman, however her admirer may ogle her on that account, is perfectly safe from his caresses.

two characters. The general symmetry which prevails in the forms of animals is obvious ; but as no precise standard of it in each species has been made or acknowledged, any slight deviation from what is most usual is scarcely attended to ; in the human form, however, from our being more nearly interested in all that belongs to it, symmetry has been more accurately defined ; and as far as human observation and selection can fix a standard for beauty, it has been fixed by the Grecian sculptors. That standard is acknowledged in all the most civilized parts of Europe : a near approach to it, makes the person to be called *regularly* beautiful ; a departure from it, whatever striking and attractive peculiarity it may bestow, is still a departure from that perfection of ideal beauty, so diligently sought after, and so nearly attained by those great artists, from the few precious remains of whose works, we have gained some idea of the refined art which raised them to such high eminence ; for by

their means we have learned to distinguish what is most exquisite and perfect, from the more ordinary degrees of excellence.

There are several expressions in the language of a neighbouring people of lively imagination, and distinguished for their gallantry and attention to the other sex, which seem to imply an uncertain idea of some character, which was not precisely beauty, but which, from whatever causes, produced striking and pleasing effects: such are *une physionomie de fantaisie*, and the well known expression of *un certain je ne sais quoi*; it is also common to say of a woman—*que sans être belle elle est piquante*—a word, by the bye, that in many points answers very exactly to picturesque. The amusing history of Roxalana and the Sultan, is also the history of the *piquant*, which is fully exemplified in her person and her manners: Marmontel certainly did not intend to give the *petit nez retroussé* as a *beautiful* feature;

but to shew how much such a striking *irregularity* might accord and co-operate, with the same sort of irregularity in the character of the mind. The playful, unequal, coquetish Roxalana, full of sudden turns and caprices, is opposed to the beautiful, tender, and constant Elvira; and the effects of irritation, to those of softness and languor: the tendency of the qualities of beauty alone towards monotony, are no less happily insinuated.

Although there are no generally received standards with respect to animals, yet those who have been in the habit of breeding them and of attending to their forms, have fixed to themselves certain standards of perfection. Mr. Bakewell, like Phidias or Apelles, had probably formed in his mind an idea of perfection beyond what he had seen in nature; and which, like them, though by a different process, he was constantly endeavouring to embody. It may be said, that this perfection relates only to their disposition to produce fat upon the most profitable parts;

a very grazier-like, and material idea of beauty it must fairly be owned : but still, if a standard of shape (from whatever cause) be acknowledged, and called beautiful, any departure from that settled correspondence and symmetry of parts, will certainly, within that jurisdiction, be considered as an *irregularity* in the form, and a consequent departure from beauty, however striking the object may be in its general appearance. More marked and sudden deviations from the general symmetry of animals, whether arising from particular conformation, from accident, or from the effects of age or disease, often very strongly attract the painter's notice, and are recorded by him ; but they never can be thought to make the object more beautiful : many of these would, on the contrary, by most men be called deformities, and not without reason. I shall hereafter have occasion to shew the connection, as well as the distinction that subsists between deformity and picturesqueness.

If we turn from animal to vegetable nature, many of the most beautiful flowers have a high degree of symmetry; so much so, that their colours appear to be laid on after a regular and finished design: but beauty is so much the prevailing character of flowers, that no one seeks for any thing picturesque among them. In trees, on the other hand, every thing appears so loose and irregular, that symmetry seems out of the question; yet still the same analogy subsists. A *beautiful* tree, considered in point of form only, must have a certain correspondence of parts, and a comparative regularity* and proportion;

* Cowley has very accurately enumerated the chief qualities of beauty, in his description of what he considers as one of the most beautiful of trees,—the lime. He has not forgot symmetry in the catalogue of its charms, though it is probable that few readers will agree with him in admiring the degree, or the style of it, which is displayed in the lime: but exact symmetry in all things was then as extravagantly in fashion, as it is now (perhaps too violently) in disgrace.

whereas inequality and irregularity alone, will give to a tree a *picturesque* appearance, more especially if the effects of age and decay, as well as of accident are conspicuous: when, for instance, some of the limbs are shattered, and the broken stump remains in the void space; when others, half twisted round by winds, hang downwards; while others again shoot in an opposite direction, and perhaps some large bough projects side ways from below the stag-headed top, and then as suddenly turns upwards, and rises above it. The general proportion of such trees, whether tall or short, thick or slender, is not material to their character as *picturesque* objects; but where beauty, elegance, and gracefulness are concerned, a short thick proportion will not give an idea of those

Stat Philyra ; haud omnes formosior altera surgit

Inter Hamadryades ; mollissima, candida, lævis,

Et viridante coma, & bene olenti flore superba,

Spargit odoratam late atque *aqualiter* umbram.

If we take *candida* for clear, as *candidi fontes*; and *viridante*, as peculiarly fresh and verdant, we have every quality of beauty separately considered.

qualities. There certainly are a great variety of pleasing forms and proportions in trees, and different men have different predilections, just as they have with respect to their own species; but I never knew any person, who, if he observed at all, was not struck with the gracefulness and elegance of a tree, whose proportion was rather tall, whose stem had an easy sweep, but which returned again in such a manner that the whole appeared completely poised and balanced, and whose boughs were in some degree pendent, but towards their extremities made a gentle curve upwards: if to such a form you add fresh and tender foliage and bark, you have every quality assigned to beauty.

In the last chapter I described the process by which a beautiful *artificial* object becomes picturesque: I will now shew the similar effect of the same kind of process in *natural* objects; and more fully to illustrate the subject, will compare at the same moment the effect of that process, on ani-

mate, and inanimate objects. It cannot be said that there is much general analogy between a tree and a human figure; but there is a great deal in the particular qualities which make them either beautiful, or picturesque. Almost all the qualities of beauty, as it might naturally be expected, belong to youth; and, among them all, none is more consonant to our ideas of beauty, or gives so general an impression of it as freshness: without it, the most perfect form wants its most precious finish; wherever it begins to depart, wherever marks of age, or of unhealthiness appear, though other effects, other sympathies, other characters may arise, there must be a diminution of beauty. Freshness, which equally belongs to vegetable and animal beauty, is one of the most striking and attractive qualities in the general appearance of a beautiful object; whether of a tree in its most flourishing state, or of a human figure in its highest perfection. In either, the smallest diminution of that quality from age or disease, is a manifest diminution of

beauty; for as it was remarked by a writer of the highest eminence, *venustas & pulchritudo corporis, secerni non potest a valetudine* *. Besides the relation, which in point of freshness in the general appearance, a beautiful plant or a beautiful person bear to each other, there is likewise a correspondence in particular parts: the luxuriance of foliage, answers to that of hair; the delicate smoothness of bark, to that of the skin; and the clear, even, and tender colour of it, to that of the complexion: there is also, in the bark and the skin, though much more sensibly in the latter, another beauty arising from a look of softness and suppleness, so opposite to the hard and *dry* appearance, which, as well as roughness, is brought on by age; and which peculiar softness (arising in this case from the free circulation of juices to every part, and in contra-distinction to what is dry, though yielding to pressure) is well expressed by the Greek word *υγγorns*; a word whose

* Cicero de Officiis, Lib. 1.

meaning I shall have occasion to dwell more fully upon hereafter*. The earliest, and most perceptible attacks of time, are made on the bark, and on the skin; which at first, however, merely lose their evenness of surface, and perfect clearness of colour; by degrees, the lines grow stronger in each; the tint more dingy; often unequal and in spots; and in proportion as either trees, or men advance towards decay, the regular progress of time, and often the effects of accident, occasion great and partial changes in their forms. In trees, the various hollows and inequalities which are produced by some parts failing, and others in consequence falling in; from accidental marks and protuberances, and from other circumstances which a long course of years gives rise to, are obvious; and many correspondent changes from similar causes in the human form, are no less obvious. By such changes, that nice symmetry and correspondence of parts so essential to beauty,

* In the Appendix.

is in both destroyed; in both, the hand of time roughens the surface, and traces still deeper furrows; a few leaves, a few hairs, are thinly scattered on their summits; that light, airy, aspiring look of youth is gone, and both seem shrunk and tottering, and ready to fall with the next blast.

Such is the change from beauty; and to what? surely not to a higher, or an equal degree, or to a different style of beauty, no, nor to any thing that resembles it: and yet, that both these objects, even in this last state, have often strong attractions for painters—their works afford sufficient testimony; that they are called picturesque—the general application of the term to such objects, makes equally clear; and that they totally differ from what is beautiful—the common feelings of mankind no less convincingly prove. One misapprehension I would wish to guard against; I do not mean to infer from the instances I have given, that an object to be picturesque, must be old and decayed; but that the most beautiful objects will become so

from the effects of age, and decay: and I believe it is equally true, that those which are naturally of a strongly marked and peculiar character, are likely to become still more picturesque by the process I have mentioned.

I have now very fully stated the principal circumstances by which the picturesque is separated from the beautiful. It is equally distinct from the sublime; for though there are some qualities common to them both, yet they differ in many essential points, and proceed from very different causes. In the first place, greatness of dimension* is a powerful cause of the sublime; the picturesque has no connection with dimension of any kind, and is as often found in the smallest as in the largest objects. The sublime, being found-

* I would by no means lay too much stress on greatness of dimension; but what Mr. Burke has observed with regard to buildings, is true of many natural objects, such as rocks, cascades, &c.: Where the scale is too diminutive, no greatness of manner will give them grandeur.

ed on principles of awe and terror, never descends to any thing light or playful; the picturesque, whose characteristics are intricacy and variety, is equally adapted to the grandest, and to the gayest scenery. Infinity is one of the most efficient causes of the sublime; the boundless ocean, for that reason, inspires awful sensations: to give it picturesqueness, you must destroy that cause of its sublimity; for it is on the shape and disposition of its boundaries, that the picturesque must in great measure depend.

Uniformity, which is so great an enemy to the picturesque, is not only compatible with the sublime, but often the cause of it. That general, equal gloom which is spread over all nature before a storm, with the stillness, so nobly described by Shakspeare, is in the highest degree sublime*. The picturesque requires greater

* And as we often see against a storm

A silence in the heavens, the wrack stand still,

The bold winds speechless, and the orb itself

As hush as death—anon the dreadful thunder

Does rend the region.

variety, and does not shew itself till the dreadful thunder has rent the region, has tossed the clouds into a thousand towering forms, and opened, as it were, the recesses of the sky. A blaze of light un-mixed with shade, on the same principles tends to the sublime only: Milton has placed light in its most glorious brightness, as an inaccessible barrier round the throne of the Almighty:

For God is light,
And never but in unapproached light
Dwelt from eternity.

And such is the power he has given even to its diminished splendor,

That the brightest seraphim
Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes.

In one place, indeed, he has introduced very picturesque circumstances in his sublime representation of the deity: but it is of the deity in wrath; it is when from the weakness and narrowness of our conceptions, we give the names and the effects of our passions, to the all-perfect Creator:

And clouds began
To darken all the hill, and smoke to roll

In dusky wreaths reluctant flames, the sign
Of wrath awak'd.

In general, however, where the glory, power, or majesty of God are represented, he has avoided that variety of form and of colouring, which might take off from simple and uniform grandeur; and has encompassed the divine essence with unapproached light, or with the majesty of darkness.

Again, (if we descend to earth) a perpendicular rock of vast bulk and height, though bare and unbroken; or a deep chasm under the same circumstances, are objects which produce awful sensations; but without some variety and intricacy, either in themselves or their accompaniments, they will not be picturesque. Lastly, a most essential difference between the two characters is, that the sublime, by its solemnity, takes off from the loveliness of beauty; whereas the picturesque renders it more captivating. This last difference is happily pointed out and illustrated, in the most ingenious and pleasing of all fic-

tions, that of Venus's Cestus. Juno, however beautiful, had no captivating charms, till she had put on the magic girdle; in other words, till she had exchanged her stately dignity, for playfulness and coquetry.

According to Mr. Burke*, the passion caused by the great and sublime in *nature*, when those causes operate most powerfully, is astonishment; and astonishment is that state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended with some degree of horror: the sublime also, being founded on ideas of pain and terror, like them operates by stretching the fibres beyond their natural tone. The passion excited by beauty, is love and complacency; it acts by relaxing the fibres somewhat below their natural tone, and this is accompanied by an inward sense of melting and languor. I have heard this part of Mr. Burke's book criticized, on a supposition that pleasure is more generally produced from the fibres

* Sublime and Beautiful, Part II. Sect. 1.

being stimulated, than from their being relaxed. To me it appears, that Mr. Burke is right with respect to that pleasure which is the effect of beauty, or whatever has an analogy to beauty, according to the principles he has laid down.

If we examine our feelings on a warm genial day, in a spot full of the softest beauties of nature, the fragrance of spring breathing around us,—pleasure then seems to be our natural state; to be received, not sought after; it is the happiness of existing to sensations of delight only; we are unwilling to move, almost to think, and desire only to feel, to enjoy. In pursuing the same train of ideas, I may add, that the effect of the picturesque is curiosity; an effect, which, though less splendid and powerful, has a more general influence. Those who have felt the excitement produced by the intricacies of wild romantic mountainous scenes, can tell how curiosity, while it prompts us to scale every rocky promontory, to explore every new recess, by its active agency

keeps the fibres to their full tone; and thus picturesqueness when mixed with either of the other characters, corrects the languor of beauty, or the tension of sublimity. But as the nature of every corrective, must be to take off from the peculiar effect of what it is to correct, so does the picturesque when united to either of the others. It is the coquetry of nature; it makes beauty more amusing, more varied, more playful, but also,

“ Less winning soft, less amiably mild.”

Again, by its variety, its intricacy, its partial concealments, it excites that active curiosity which gives play to the mind, loosening those iron bonds, with which astonishment chains up its faculties*.

Where characters, however distinct in their nature, are perpetually mixed together in such various degrees and manners, it is not always easy to draw the exact line of

* This seems to be perfectly applicable to tragedy, and is at once its apology and condemnation. Whatever relieves the mind from a strong impression, of course weakens that impression.

separation: I think, however, we may conclude, that where an object, or a set of objects are without smoothness or grandeur, but from their intricacy, their sudden and irregular deviations, their variety of forms, tints, and lights and shadows, are interesting to a cultivated eye, they are simply picturesque. Such, for instance, are the rough banks that often inclose a bye-road, or a hollow lane: imagine the *size* of these banks, and the *space* between them to be increased, till the lane, becomes a deep dell; the coves, large caverns; the peeping stones, hanging rocks, so that the whole may impress an idea of awe and grandeur;---the sublime will then be mixed with the picturesque, though the *scale* only, not the *style* of the scenery would be changed. On the other hand, if parts of the banks were smooth and gently sloping; or if in the middle space the turf were soft and close-bitten; or if a gentle stream passed between them, whose clear, unbroken surface reflected all their varieties---the beautiful and the picturesque, by means of that

softness and smoothness, would then be united.

I may here observe, that as softness is become a *visible* quality as well as smoothness, so also, from the same kind of sympathy, it is a principle of beauty in many visible objects: but as the hardest bodies are those which receive the highest polish, and consequently the highest degree of smoothness, there must be a number of objects in which smoothness and softness are for that reason incompatible. The one however is not unfrequently mistaken for the other, and I have more than once heard pictures, which were so smoothly finished that they looked like ivory, commended for their softness.

The skin of a delicate woman, is an example of softness and smoothness united; but if by art a higher polish be given to the skin, the softness, and in that case I may add the beauty, is destroyed. Fur, moss, hair, wool, &c. are comparatively rough; but they are soft, and yield to pressure, and therefore take off from the appear-

ance of hardness, and also of edginess. A stone or rock, when polished by water, is smoother, but less soft than when covered with moss; and upon this principle, the wooded banks of a river have often a softer general effect, than the bare, shaven border of a canal. There is the same difference between the grass of a pleasure-ground mowed to the quick, and that of a fresh meadow; and it frequently happens, that continual mowing destroys the verdure, as well as the softness. So much does excessive attachment to one principle destroy its own ends.

Before I end this chapter, I wish to say a few words with respect to my adoption of Mr. Burke's doctrine. It has been asserted, that I have pre-supposed our ideas of the sublime and beautiful to be clearly settled*; whereas the least attention to what I have written, would have shewn the contrary. As far as my own opinion is concerned, I certainly am convinced of

* Essay on Design in Gardening, by Mr. George Mason, page 201.

the general truth and accuracy of Mr. Burke's system, for it is the foundation of my own; but I must be very ignorant of human nature, to suppose "our ideas clearly settled" on any question of that kind. I therefore have always spoken cautiously, and even doubtingly, to avoid the imputation of judging for others; I have said—*if* we agree with Mr. Burke—*according* to Mr. Burke,—and in the next chapter to this, I have stated that Mr. Burke has done *a great deal towards* settling the vague and contradictory ideas, &c. These passages so very plainly shew how little I presumed to suppose our ideas were clearly settled, that no person, who had read the book with any degree of attention, could have made such a remark; and I must say, that whoever does venture to criticize what he has not considered, is much more his own enemy, than the author's.

By way of convincing his readers that Mr. Burke's ideas of the sublime are unworthy of being attended to, Mr. G. Ma-

son has the following remark, which I have taken care to copy very exactly; "The majority of thinking and learned men, whom it has been my lot to converse with on such subjects, are as well persuaded of *terror's* being the cause of *sublime*, as that Tenterden steeple is of Goodwin sands."

As Mr. Mason seems very conversant with the classics, as well as with English authors, and as the sublime in poetry has been discussed by writers of high authority, and the sublimity of many passages very generally acknowledged, I could wish that he and his learned friends, would take the trouble of examining such passages in Homer, Virgil, Shakspeare, Milton, and all the poets who are most eminent for their sublimity: and should they find, as surely they will, that almost all of them are founded upon terror, or on those modifications of it which Mr. Burke has so admirably pointed out, they may perhaps be inclined to speak somewhat less contemptuously of his researches. They may even be led to reflect, what must have been

the depth and penetration of that man's mind, who, scarcely arrived at manhood, clearly saw how one great principle, an acknowledged cause of the sublime in poetry, was likewise the most powerful cause of sublimity in all objects whatsoever; pursued it through all the works of art, and of nature; and explained, illustrated and adorned his discovery, with that ingenuity, and that brilliancy of language, in which he stands unrivalled.

A number of sublime passages in poetry will of course present themselves to a person so well read in the classics as Mr. Mason, but I will beg leave to remind him, and those who reject Mr. Burke's doctrine, of a few instances, in which if terror be not the cause of the sublime, I have no idea of any cause of any effect. It is natural to begin by the great father of all poetry, and by a passage which Longinus has particularly dwelt upon: it is that celebrated one in the *Iliad**, where Homer has described Jupi-

* *Iliad*, B. xx. L. 56.

ter thundering above, Neptune shaking the earth beneath, and Pluto starting from his throne with terror, lest his secret and dreary abodes should be burst open to the day. From this short exposition the reader may judge what is the principle on which the sublimity of this passage is founded.

The most sublime passage, according to my idea, in Virgil, or perhaps in any other poet, is that magnificent personification of a thunder storm.

*Ipse Pater, media nimborum in nocte, corusca
Fulmina molitur dextra, quo maxima motu
Terra tremit, fugere feræ, & mortalia corda
Per gentes humilis stravit pavor,—Ille flagranti
Aut Atho aut Rhodopen, aut alta Ceraunia telo
Dejicit.*

Divest these two passages of terror, what remains? In this last particularly, the sublime opposition between the cause and the effect of terror, more strongly than in any other illustrates the principle. And I may here observe, that one circumstance which gives peculiar grandeur to personifi-

cations, is the attributing of natural events, to the immediate action of some angry and powerful agent.

Ipse Pater mediâ, &c.

Neptunus muros sævoque emota tridente

Fundamenta quatit.

Whenever Dante is mentioned, the inscription over the gates of hell, and the Conte Ugolino, are among the first things which occur. Milton's *Paradise Lost* is wrought up to a higher pitch of awful terror than any other poem; to a mind full of poetical fire, he added the most studied attention to effect; and I think there is a singular instance of that attention, and of the use he made of terror, in one of his most famous similes:

As when the sun new risen,
Looks through the horizontal misty air
Shorn of his beams, or from behind the moon
In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations.

The circumstances are perfectly applicable to the fallen archangel; but Milton possibly felt that the sun himself, when

shorn of his beams and in eclipse, was a less magnificent object than when in full splendour, and therefore added* that dignified image of terror

And with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs.

From Shakspeare also, a number of detached passages might be quoted, to prove what surely needs no additional argument; but that most original creator, and most accurate observer, of whom no Englishman can speak without enthusiasm, has furnished a more ample proof of the sublime effect of unremitting terror. Let those who have read, or seen his tragedies, consider which among them all is most strikingly sublime; which of them most

* It might even be conjectured, that he had literally *added* that last image; for the pause (which no poet took more pains to vary) is the same as in the preceding line, and the half verse which follows

“Darken’d so, yet shone”

would do equally well in point of metre, and of sense after

On half the nations.

powerfully seizes on the imagination, and rivets the attention, I believe almost every voice will give it for Macbeth. In that all is terror; and therefore either Aristotle, Longinus, Shakspeare, and Burke, or Mr. G. Mason, and his learned friends, have been totally wrong in their ideas of the sublime, and of its causes.

That the same principle prevails in all natural scenery, has been so fully and clearly explained by Mr. Burke, that any further arguments seem superfluous; yet as it sometimes happens, that what is placed in a different, though less striking light, may chance to make an impression on particular minds, I will mention a few things which have occurred to me. I am persuaded that it would be difficult to conceive any set of objects, to which, however grand in themselves, an addition of terror would not give a higher degree of sublimity; and surely that must be a cause, and a principal cause, the increase of which increases the effect, the absence of which, weakens, or destroys it. The sea is at all

times a grand object; need I say how much that grandeur is increased by the violence of another element, and again, by thunder and lightning? Why are rocks and precipices more sublime, when the tide dashes at the foot of them, forbidding all access, or cutting off all retreat, than when we can with ease approach, or retire from them? How is it that Shakspeare has heightened the sublimity of Dover Cliff, so much beyond what the real scene exhibits? by terror; he has placed terror above on the brink of the abyss; in the middle where

“ Half way down

“ Hangs one who gathers samphire ; *dreadful trade.*”

And even on the beach below, drawing an idea of terror from the comparative deficiency of one sense:

The murmuring surge

That on the unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes

Cannot be *heard* so high ; I'll *look* no more

Lest my brain turn.

The nearer any grand or terrible objects in nature press upon the mind (provided

that mind is able to contemplate them with awe, but without abject fear) the more sublime will be their effects. The most savage rocks, precipices, and cataracts, as they keep their stations, are only awful; but should an earthquake shake their foundations, and open a new gulph beneath the cataract—he, who removed from immediate danger, could dare at such a moment to gaze on such a spectacle, would surely have sensations of a much higher kind, than those which were impressed upon him when all was still and unmoved.

CHAPTER V.

OF the three characters, two only are in any degree subject to the improver; to *create* the sublime is above our contracted powers, though we may sometimes heighten, and at all times lower its effects by art. It is, therefore, on a proper attention to the beautiful and the picturesque, that the art of improving real landscapes must depend.

As beauty is the most pleasing of all ideas to the human mind, it is very natural that it should be most sought after, and that the name should have been applied to

every species of excellence. Mr. Burke has done a great deal towards settling the vague and contradictory ideas which were entertained on that subject, by investigating its principal causes and effects; but as the best things are often perverted to the worst purposes, so his admirable treatise has, perhaps, been one cause of the insipidity which has prevailed under the name of improvement. Few places have any claim to sublimity, and where nature has not given them that character, art is ineffectual; beauty, therefore, is the great object, and improvers have learned from the highest authority, that two of its principal causes are smoothness, and gradual variation; these qualities are in themselves very seducing, but they are still more so, when applied to the surface of ground, from its being in every man's power to produce them; it requires neither taste, nor invention, but merely the mechanical hand and eye of many a common labourer; and he who can make a nice asparagus bed, has one of the most essential quali-

cations of an improver, and may soon learn the whole mystery of slopes and hanging levels.

If the principles of the beautiful, according to Mr. Burke, and those of the picturesque, according to my ideas, be just, it seldom happens that those two qualities are perfectly unmixed; and I believe, it is for want of observing how nature has blended them, and from attempting to make objects beautiful by dint of smoothness and flowing lines, that so much insipidity has arisen.

The most enchanting object the eye of man can behold—that which immediately presents itself to his imagination when beauty is mentioned—that, in comparison of which all other beauty appears tasteless and uninteresting—is the face of a beautiful woman; and there, where nature has fixed the throne of beauty, the very seat of its empire, observe how she has guarded it, in her most perfect models, from its two dangerous foes, insipidity and monotony.

The eye-brows, and the eye-lashes, by their projecting shade over the transparent

surface of the eye, and above all the hair, by its comparative roughness and its partial concealments, accompany and relieve the softness, clearness, and smoothness of all the rest: where the hair has no natural roughness, it is often artificially curled and crisped, and it cannot be supposed that both sexes have been so often mistaken in what would best become them. As the general surface of a beautiful face is soft and smooth, its general form consists of lines that insensibly melt into each other; yet if we may judge from those remains of ancient arts, which are considered as models of beauty, the Grecian sculptors were of opinion that a line nearly strait of the nose and forehead was required, to give a zest to all the other waving lines of the face.

Flowers are the most delicate and beautiful of all inanimate objects; but their queen the rose, grows on a rough thorny bush with jagged leaves. The moss rose has the addition of a rough hairy fringe, which almost makes a part of the flower itself. The arbutus, with its fruit, its pen-

dant flowers, and rich glossy foliage, is perhaps, the most beautiful of all the hardier ever-green shrubs; but the bark of it is rugged, and the leaves, which like those of the rose, are sawed at the edges, have those edges pointed upwards, and clustering in spikes: and it may possibly be from that circumstance, and from the boughs having the same upright tendency, that Virgil calls it *arbutus horrida*, or, as it stands in some manuscripts, *horrens*. Among the foreign oaks, maples, &c. those are particularly esteemed, the leaves of which (according to a common, though perhaps contradictory phrase) are beautifully jagged.

The oriental plane has always been reckoned a tree of the greatest beauty: Xerxes's passion for one of them is well known, as also the high estimation they were held in by the Greeks and Romans. The surface of their leaves is smooth and glossy, and of a bright pleasant green; but they are so deeply indented, and so full of sharp angles, that the tree itself is often distinguished by the name of the true *jagged* oriental plane.

The vine leaf has, in * all respects, a strong resemblance to the leaf of the plane; and that extreme richness of effect, which every body must be struck with in them both, is greatly owing to those sharp angles, to those sudden variations, so contrary to the idea of beauty when considered by itself. On the other hand, a cluster of fine grapes, in point of form, tint, and light and shadow, is a specimen of unmixed beauty; and the vine with its fruit, may be cited as one of the most striking instances of the union of the two characters, in which, however, that of beauty infinitely prevails: and who will venture to assert, that the charm of the whole would be greater, by separating them? by taking off all the angles and sharp points, and making the outline of the leaves, as round and flowing as that of the fruit? The effect of these jagged points and angles is more

* The leaf of the Burgundy vine is rough, and its inferiority, in point of beauty, to the smooth-leaved vines, is, I think, very apparent, and clearly owing to that circumstance.

strongly marked in sculpture, especially in vases of metal ; where the vine leaf, if imprudently handled, would at least prove that sharpness is very contrary to the beautiful in feeling ; and the analogy between the two senses is surely very just. It may also be remarked, that in all such works *sharpness* of execution is a term of high praise.

I must here observe (and I must beg to call the reader's attention to what in my idea throws a strong light on the whole of the subject) that almost all ornaments are rough, and most of them sharp, which is a mode of roughness ; and, considered analogically, the most contrary to beauty of any mode. But as the ornaments are rough, so the ground is generally smooth ; which shews, that though smoothness be the most essential quality of beauty, without which it can scarcely exist—yet that roughness, in its different modes and degrees, is the ornament, the fringe of beauty, that which gives it life and spirit, and preserves it from baldness and insipidity.

A moment's consideration indeed will

shew us, that the obvious, the only process in ornamenting any smooth surface, independently of colour, must be that of making it less smooth, that is, comparatively rough: there must be different degrees of roughness, of sharpness, of projections; and this is the character of those ornaments that have been admired for ages. The column is smooth; the ornamental part, the capital is rough: the facing of a building smooth, the frize and cornice rough and suddenly projecting: it is so in vases, in embroidery, in every thing that admits of ornament; and as ornament is the most prominent and striking part of a beautiful whole, it is frequently taken for the most essential part, and obtains the first place in descriptions. Thus Virgil in speaking of a part of dress highly ornamented says,

Pallam gemmis auroque rigentem.

And Dryden in the same spirit, when describing the cup that contained the heart of Guiscard calls it,

A goblet rich with gems, and *rough* with gold.

A plain stone building, may not only be very beautiful, but by many persons be thought peculiarly so from its simplicity; but were an architect to decorate the shafts, as well as the capitals of his columns, and all the smooth stone work of his house or temple, there are few people who would not be sensible of the difference between a beautiful building, and one richly ornamented. This, in my mind, is the spirit of that famous reproof of Apelles (among all the painters of antiquity the most renowned for beauty) to one of his scholars who was loading a Helen with ornaments; "Young man," said he, "not being able to paint her beautiful, you have made her rich."

All that has just been said on the effect, which, in objects of sight, a due proportion of roughness and sharpness gives to smoothness, as likewise on the danger of making these two qualities too predominant, may, I think, be very aptly illustrated by means of another sense. Discords in music, which are analagous to

sharp and angular objects of sight, are introduced by the most judicious composers, in their accompaniments to the sweetest and most flowing melodies, in order to relieve the ear from that languor and weariness, which long continued smoothness always brings on. But, on the other hand, should a composer from too great a fondness for discords and extraneous modulations, neglect the flow and smoothness of melody, or should he smother a sweet and simple air beneath a load even of the richest harmony, he would resemble an architect, who from a false notion of the picturesque, should destroy all repose and continuity in his designs, by the number of breaks and projections, or should try to improve some elegant and simple building, by loading it with a profusion of ornaments. The most beautiful and melodious of all sounds, that of the human voice in its highest perfection, appears to the greatest advantage when there is some degree of sharpness in the instrument which accompanies it; as in the harp, the violin,

or the harpsichord: the flute, and even the organ have too much of the same quality of sound; they give no relief to the voice; it is like accompanying smooth water with smooth banks: yet will any one say, that separately considered, the sound of the harp or the violin is as beautiful as that of a fine human voice, or that they ought to be classed together? or that discords are as beautiful as concords, or that both are beautiful, because when they are mixed with judgment, the whole is more delightful? Does not this shew that what is very justly called beautiful, from the essential qualities of beauty being predominant, is frequently, nay generally composite; and that we act against the constant practice of nature and of judicious art, when we endeavour to make objects more beautiful, by depriving them of what gives beauty some of its most powerful attractions?

CHAPTER VI.

THE various and striking lights in which Mr. Burke has placed the alliance between smoothness and beauty in objects of sight, and the very close and convincing arguments he has drawn by analogy from the other senses, I should have supposed would have left but little doubt on the subject. As I find, however, that the position has been questioned by persons to whose opinions much respect is due, I shall venture, notwithstanding the copious and masterly manner in which the subject has been

treated, to mix a few observations on smoothness with some farther remarks I have to offer on the opposite quality of roughness. I am indeed highly interested in the question, for if this principle of Mr. Burke's should be false, if smoothness should not be an essential quality of beauty, if objects be as generally beautiful where roughness, as where smoothness prevails, and lastly, if, as many have supposed, all that strongly attracts and captivates the eye be included in the sublime and the beautiful, my distinction of course must fall to the ground. I cannot help flattering myself, however, that the having considered and compared the three characters together, has thrown a reciprocal light on each; and that the picturesque fills up a vacancy between the sublime and the beautiful, and accounts for the pleasure we receive from many objects, on principles distinct from them both; which objects should therefore be placed in a separate class.

In the last chapter I have endeavoured

to shew how nature has blended a certain portion of the qualities of the picturesque, of roughness, sharpness, &c. in many objects generally allowed to be beautiful, and that the same mixture has been adopted in many of the most approved works of art: and that although smoothness be the ground-work of beauty, yet that roughness is its fringe and ornament, and that which preserves it from insipidity. I shall now try to point out, what, according to my notions, is the most usual effect of the two qualities, and in what manner roughness and smoothness act upon the organs and upon the mind.

One principal charm of smoothness, whether in a literal or a metaphorical sense, is, that it conveys the idea of repose; roughness, on the contrary, conveys that of irritation, but at the same time of animation, spirit, and variety. This is very strongly exemplified in the sense of hearing. Smooth and flowing strains in music, give a pleasing and voluptuous repose to the ear and the mind; an effect which is

beautifully described on the well-known lines of Dryden's ode,

Softly sweet in Lydian measures,
Soon he soothed his soul to pleasures.

On the other hand, the character of martial music, which rouses and animates the soul, is finely characterized by

The spirit-stirring drum, th' ear-piercing fife.

And the notes of the trumpet, which rends the air with its harsh and sudden blasts, bears no small degree of analogy to all that is rude, broken, and abrupt, in visible objects.

That in speaking, a smooth and even tone of voice indicates inward calm and repose, and sharp, broken, irregular accents irritation, is too obvious to be dwelt upon.

In the sense of seeing, with which we are more immediately concerned, the position may be shortly exemplified in the instances already given of buildings and columns: if the whole, or a considerable part of them were to be covered with sharp

projecting ornaments, the eye would be harassed and distracted, and there would be a want of repose ; on the other hand, if the whole were smooth and even, there would be a want of spirit and animation.

It may be objected to this notion of the effects of smoothness and roughness, that the most highly polished, and consequently the smoothest of all surfaces, are those which most strongly reflect the light, and of course most powerfully irritate the organ. But here likewise roughness, in which term I mean to include whatever is sharp, pointed, angular, or in any way contrary to smoothness, produces the effect I have ascribed to it : for when smooth polished surfaces are cut into sharp angles, the irritation is infinitely increased. A table diamond, for instance, like other highly polished objects, has a considerable degree of stimulus ; but it is only when cut into a number of sharp points and angles, that it acquires the distinguished title of a brilliant. Light itself, when broken in its passage, though the quantity be

diminished, is rendered more irritating; we can bear the full uninterrupted splendour of the setting sun, nay can gaze on the orb itself with little uneasiness; but when its rays are broken by passing through a thin screen of leaves and branches, no eye is proof against the irritation.

In all cases where there is a strong effect of light, whether immediate or reflected, there is of course a real irritation on the organ: and it probably will be admitted, that there is a greater degree of it when the rays strike on pointed or angular, than on smooth and even surfaces: but it may be said, that when there is no particular light upon objects, as on a sunless day, their roughness or abruptness causes no irritation in the organs of sight. I imagine, however, that besides the real irritation which is produced by means of broken lights, all broken, rugged, and abrupt forms and surfaces, have also by sympathy somewhat of the same effect on the sight, as on the touch. Indeed as it is generally admitted, that the sense of

seeing acquires all its perceptions of hard, soft, rough, smooth, &c. from that of feeling, such a sympathy seems almost unavoidable. Rough and rugged objects, especially such as are sharp and pointed, are found at a very early age to give pain and irritation, when imprudently touched or applied to the body; thence the eye learns to distinguish the visible appearance of such objects, and to connect it with the ideas that had been impressed by means of the sense of feeling. No one, it is true, can recollect when the first impression was made, or when the process commenced, by which the sight began to have a perception of qualities, which can alone excite a sensation by means of another sense; but the impression, in itself a strong and lasting one, is frequently renewed. The opposite impressions of pleasure, ease, and repose, from smooth objects, are made and renewed in the same manner, and the same sort of connection established. Thus a gently sloping bank of soft and smooth turf, must, I imagine, suggest the idea of

the quality of smoothness, and consequently of ease and repose to a person while he is viewing it, just as it does when he afterwards sits or lies down upon it: on the other hand a rough, abrupt, and stony bank, with stumps and roots of trees mixed with thorns and briars, would most certainly present ideas of a very opposite kind, to a man who had to make his way through such obstructions; and therefore would probably suggest them, though less forcibly, when at other times he was merely looking at it; especially if the rude brakes, and the abruptnesses of the ground, were contrasted, as is often the case, by openings of smooth turf and gently swelling hillocks. All objects of a rugged and abrupt kind are so contrary to the nature of repose, that when a soft and pleasing calm is the leading feature in any description, the very supposition of such objects or qualities being introduced, would disturb the mind of the reader. Shakspeare has most beautifully and poetically impressed

an image of stillness and repose when he says,

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon yon bank !

Nothing in that line gives any indication what sort of a bank it was ; but if you fancy it broken and abrupt, the moon might indeed shine, but it could no longer sleep upon it.

The same kind of sympathy that takes place in smaller objects, in broken ground, roots, stones, thorns, or briars, where a certain degree of difficulty and irritation is common and familiar, seems to continue whatever be the scale. A fall from a great height, as from the side of a precipice, is equally destructive whether the surface upon which you would fall be rugged, or plain : yet the imagination would be differently affected by looking down upon an even surface, or on sharp pointed rocks ; and some feeling of that kind I believe is always connected, though we may not at all times be conscious of it, with broken and pointed forms.

But although it seems highly probable

that such forms produce a kind of stimulus from sympathy, not unlike that which broken lights excite in the organ, yet the most constant and manifest stimulus which rough and abrupt objects produce in picturesque scenery, is that of curiosity. This will clearly appear, if we consider in how much greater a degree all that most excites and nourishes curiosity abounds in scenes where the lines and forms are broken and abrupt, than in those where they are smooth and flowing.

If, by way of example, we take any smooth object, the lines of which are flowing, such as a down of the finest turf, with gentle swelling knolls and hillocks of every soft and undulating form—though the eye may repose on this with pleasure, yet the whole is seen at once, and no further curiosity is excited. But let those swelling knolls (without altering the scale) be broken into abrupt rocky projections, with deep hollows and coves beneath the overhanging stones; instead of the smooth turf, let there be furze, heath, or fern, with open patches

between, and fragments of the rock and large stones lying in irregular masses—it is clear, if you suppose these two spots of the same extent, and on the same scale, that the whole of the one may be comprehended immediately, and that if you traverse it in every direction, little new can occur; while in the other, every step changes the composition. Then each of these broken projections and fragments, have as many suddenly varying forms and aspects as they have breaks, even when the sun is hidden; but when it does shine upon them, each break is the occasion of some brilliant light, opposed to some sudden shadow. All such deep coves, and hollows, as are usually found in this style of scenery, invite the eye to penetrate into their recesses, yet keep its curiosity alive and unsatisfied; whereas in the other, the light and shadow has the same uniform, unbroken character as the ground itself.

I have in both these scenes avoided any mention of trees; for in all trees of every

growth, there is a comparative roughness and intricacy, which, unless counteracted by great skill in the improver, will always prevent absolute monotony: yet the difference between those which appear planted or cleared for the purpose of beauty, with the ground made perfectly smooth about them, and those which are wild and uncleared, with the ground of the same character, is very apparent. Take, for instance, any open grove, where the trees, though neither in rows nor at equal distances, are detached from each other, and cleared from all underwood; the turf on which they stand smooth and level; and their stems distinctly seen. Such a grove, of full-grown flourishing trees, that have had room to extend their heads and branches, is deservedly called beautiful; and if a gravel road winds easily through it, the whole will be in character. But how different is the scenery in forests! whoever has been among them, and has attentively observed the character of those parts, where wild tangled thickets open into

glades, half seen across the stems of old stag-headed oaks and twisted beeches; has remarked the irregular tracks of wheels, and the foot-paths of men and animals, how they seem to have been seeking and forcing their way, in every direction—must have felt how differently the stimulus of curiosity is excited in such scenes, and how much likewise the varied effects of light and shadow are promoted, by the variety and intricacy of the objects.

If it be true that a certain irritation or stimulus is necessary to the picturesque, it is equally so that a soft and pleasing repose is the effect, and the characteristic of the beautiful; and what in my mind places this position in a very favourable light is, that the peculiar excellence of the painter who most studied the beautiful in landscape, is characterised by *il riposo di Claudio*; and when the mind of man is in the delightful state of repose, of which Claude's pictures are the image; when he feels that mild and equal sunshine of the soul which warms and cheers, but neither

inflames nor irritates, his heart seems to dilate with happiness, he is disposed to every act of kindness and benevolence, to love and cherish all around him. These are the sensations which beauty considered generally, and without any regard to the sex or to the nature of the object in which it resides, does, and ought to excite. A mind in such a state may be compared to the surface of a pure and tranquil lake, into which if the smallest pebble be cast, the waters, like the affections, seem gently to expand themselves on every side: but when the mind is carried on by any eager pursuit, the still voice of the milder affections is as little heard, and its effect as short lived, as the sound or effect of a pebble, when thrown into a rapid and rocky stream.

Repose is always used in a good sense; as a state, if not of positive pleasure, at least as one of freedom from all pain and uneasiness: irritation, almost always in an opposite sense, and yet, contradictory as it may appear, we must acknowledge it to be the source of our most

active and lively pleasures: it's nature, however, is eager and hurrying, and such are the pleasures which spring from it. Let those who have been used to observe the works of nature, reflect on their sensations when viewing the smooth and tranquil scene of a beautiful lake, or the wild abrupt and noisy one of a picturesque river: I think they will own them to have been as different as the scenes themselves, and that nothing but the poverty of language makes us call two sensations so distinct from each other, by the common name of pleasure.

All that has been said in this chapter with respect to the effects of roughness and smoothness, of light and shadow, in producing either irritation or repose, will receive much additional illustration from that art, by means of which the most striking characters of visible objects have been pointed out to our notice, and impressed on our minds. I now therefore shall take a view of the practice and principles of some of the most eminent painters, and

shall endeavour to strengthen the positions which I have ventured to advance, by their examples and authority.

The genius of Rubens was strongly turned to the picturesque disposition of his figures, so as often to sacrifice every other consideration to the intricacy, contrast, and striking variations of their forms and groups. Such a disposition of objects, seems to call for something similar in the management of the light and shade; and accordingly we owe some of the most striking examples of both, to his fertile invention. In point of brilliancy, of extreme splendour of light* no pictures can stand in competition with those of Rubens: sometimes those lights are almost unmixed with shade; at other times they burst from dark shadows, they glance on

* I speak of those pictures (and they are very numerous) in which he aimed at great brilliancy. As no painter possessed more entirely all the principles of his art, the solemn breadth of his light and shade is, on some occasions, no less striking than its force and splendour on others.

the different parts of the picture, and produce that flicker (as it sometimes is called) so captivating to the eye under his management, but so apt to offend it when attempted by inferior artists, or by those who are less thoroughly masters of the principles of harmony than that great painter. All these dazzling effects are heightened by the spirited management of his pencil, by those sharp, animated touches, which give life and energy to every object.

Correggio's principal attention in point of form, was directed to flow of outline, and gradual variation: of this he never entirely lost sight, even in his most capricious fore-shortenings; and the style of his light and shadow is so congenial, that the one seems the natural consequence of the other. His pictures are always cited as the most perfect models of those soft and insensible transitions, of that union of effect, which above every thing else, impresses the general idea of beauty. The manner of his pencilling is exactly of a piece

with the rest; all seems melted together, but with so nice a judgment, as to avoid, by means of certain free, yet delicate touches, that laboured hardness and insipidity, which arise from what is called high finishing. Correggio's pictures are indeed as far removed from monotony, as from glare; he seems to have felt beyond all others, the exact degree of brilliancy which accords with the softness of beauty, and to have been with regard to figures, what Claude was in landscape.

The pictures of Claude are brilliant in a high degree; but that brilliancy is so diffused over the whole of them, so happily balanced, so mellowed and subdued by the almost visible atmosphere which pervades every part, and unites all together, that nothing in particular catches the eye; the whole is splendour, the whole is repose; every thing lighted up, every thing in sweetest harmony. Rubens differs as strongly from Claude, as he does from Correggio; his landscapes are full of the peculiarities, and picturesque

accidents in nature; of striking contrasts in form, colour, and light and shadow: sun-beams bursting through a small opening in a dark wood—a rainbow against a stormy sky—effects of thunder and lightning—torrents rolling down trees torn up by the roots, and the dead bodies of men and animals—are among the sublime and picturesque circumstances exhibited by his daring pencil. These sudden gleams, these cataracts of light, these bold oppositions of clouds and darkness which he has so nobly introduced, would destroy all the beauty and elegance of Claude: on the other hand, the mild and equal sunshine of that charming painter, would as ill accord with the twisted and singular forms, and the bold and animated variety of the landscapes of Rubens*.

* The distinct characters and effects of light and shadow on the great face of nature, which have been imitated by Rubens and by Claude, may not unaptly be compared to the no less distinct characters and effects of smiles on the human countenance: nothing is so captivating, or seems so much to accord with our ideas of beauty, as the

If the general brilliancy and dazzling effects of that splendid painter, may justly be opposed to the more mild diffusion

smiles of a beautiful countenance; yet they have sometimes a striking mixture of an other character. Of this kind are those smiles which break out suddenly from a serious, sometimes from almost a severe countenance, and which, when that gleam is over, leave no trace of it behind—

Brief as the lightning in the collied night,
That in a spleen unfolds both heaven and earth;
And e'er a man has time to say, behold!
The jaws of darkness do devour it up.

This sudden effect is often hinted at by the Italian poets, as appears by their allusion to the most sudden and dazzling of lights;—*gli scintilla un riso—lampeggia un riso—il balenar' d'un riso.*

There is another smile, which seems in the same degree to accord with the ideas of beauty only. It is that smile which proceeds from a mind full of sweetness and sensibility, and which, when it is over, still leaves on the countenance its mild and amiable impression; as after the sun is set, the mild glow of his rays is still diffused over every object. This smile, with the glow that accompanies it, is beautifully painted by Milton, as most becoming an inhabitant of heaven.

To whom the angel, with a smile that glow'd
Celestial rosy red, love's proper hue,
Thus answer'd.

of light in Claude and Correggio, the deep midnight shadows which Rembrandt has spread over the greater part of his canvas, may be opposed to it with equal justice; and the whole of the comparison between these painters may serve to shew, how much the picturesque delights in extremes, while the beautiful preserves a just medium between them. The general character of Rembrandt's pictures is that of extreme force, arising from a small portion of light amidst surrounding darkness; and though it be true that Rubens and Correggio, and even Claude, have produced effects of that kind, yet it was only occasionally, and where the subject, as in night scenes, required them; whereas in Rembrandt they result from his prevailing principle: and it hardly need be said, how much more they are suited to objects and circumstances of a picturesque, than a beautiful character. Rembrandt's pencilling, where it is most apparent (for he well knew where to soften it) is no less different from that of the painters I have mentioned, than the principle on

which he wrought; his colours seem, as it were, dabbed on the canvass; and one might suppose them to have been worked upon it with some coarser instrument than a painter's brush. Many painters indeed when they represent any striking effect of light, leave the touches of the pencil more rough and strongly marked, than the quality of the objects themselves seems to justify; but Rembrandt, who succeeded beyond all others in these forcible effects, carried also this method of creating them further than any other master. Those who have seen his famous picture in the Stadthouse at Amsterdam, may remember a figure highly illuminated, whose dress is a silver tissue, with fringes, tassels, and other ornaments, nearly of the same brilliant colour: it is the most surprising instance I ever saw of the effect of that rough manner of pencilling, in producing what most nearly approaches to the glitter and to the irritation which is caused by real light, when acting powerfully on any object; and this too with a due attention to general har-

mony, and with such a commanding truth of representation, as no high finishing can give*.

* The following anecdote of Sir Joshua Reynolds, which a friend of mine heard from a pupil of his who was present at the scene, will serve as a further illustration of the subject; and I trust will not be unacceptable to the reader. This pupil going one day into Sir Joshua's painting room, found him in a state of perplexing contemplation; he had been endeavouring to produce a glitter on a piece of splendid drapery, which occupied a very interesting situation in the centre of the eye of his picture, and never could do it to his mind: he tried again and again; rubbed it out; took snuff with unusual energy, but all would not do. He now looked for some time despondingly on the picture, playing with a large hog's brush which he held in his hand: at length he began to move backwards towards the chimney with his brush behind him, till his heel kicked the fender; when stooping sideways, he thrust the brush into the ashes and cinders. His face then assumed a look of hope mixed with exultation, and having just wiped off a portion of the cinders on the carpet, he advanced towards his work, and grouted on the remains of them upon the part where he wished the brilliancy to be produced, crying out with a triumphant air, "that will do."

His object, which was accomplished by a kind of instinct, seems to have been this; to lay on such a ground for the reception of the proper colours, as by facing the

Rembrandt, it is well known, had scarcely any idea of beauty or elegance; and as little of that grandeur in the human form, which results from correctness and fulness of outline, added to nobleness of character. He had however a grandeur of his own of a mixed and peculiar kind, produced by the arrangement of his compositions, and even by the form of many of the objects themselves, when set off and partially concealed by the breadth and the disposition of his light and shadow. In that branch of his art in which he is so pre-eminent, he often produces a mysterious solemnity, which impresses very grand ideas, and which I am persuaded would add no small degree of grandeur to the figures and compositions of the higher schools. Rembrandt has great variety and truth of expression, though seldom of an elevated kind; one figure of his, however,—the Christ

light in a number of different directions might produce such a flicker, as could not be given by putting on the colours in the common way upon a smooth surface.

raising Lazarus,—for the simple, yet commanding dignity of the character and action, is perhaps superior to that of any painter who has treated that awful subject. I do not recollect any other figure of his in that style equally striking; but should the Christ be a single instance, it still may shew that genius was not wanting, though early education and habit, and all that he saw around him whether in nature or in art, had given a different bias to his mind. That bias seems to have been towards rich, and picturesque effects, especially those of light and shadow; and the figures, dresses, buildings, scenes which he represented, though they occasionally produced grandeur, were chiefly chosen with a view to such effects. What was his opinion of studying the antique, may be inferred from an anecdote mentioned in his life: he carried one of his visitors into an inward room, and shewing him a parcel of old fashioned dresses, and odd bits of armour, “there,” said he, “are my *antiques*.”

Rubens, though he set a just value on ancient statues, and though he endeavoured to gain a more chaste and correct outline by copying, and, as it is said, by tracing the outlines of drawings that were excellent in that respect, could never overcome his original bias. Indeed it may admit of some doubt whether a strict attention to such excellencies be compatible with that peculiar spirit and effect which his works display; and whether he might not have lost more on one side, than he would have gained on the other. Much certainly may be done by early and constant practice, but correctness and purity are allied to caution and timidity; and to be in a high degree correct and chaste in form, spirited in touch, rich in colouring, and splendid in effect, is a combination of which the art of painting since its revival, can hardly be said to have given any perfect example.

As the most exquisite of the ancient statues are the acknowledged standards of grandeur and beauty of form, combined with purity and correctness of outline, so

the painters who have most formed themselves on those models, however they may have departed from them in certain points, are most distinguished for some of those excellencies ; but one very material difference between sculpture and painting, must always be taken into consideration. In sculpture, the whole work being of one uniform colour, and the figures, whether single or grouped, without any accompaniments, there is nothing to seduce or distract the eye from the form ; to which therefore the efforts of the sculptor are almost exclusively directed : whereas in painting, the charm of general effect or impression, of whatever kind it may be, will often counterbalance the greatest defects in point of form, and make amends for the want of grandeur, beauty, and correctness.

The grandest style of painting is generally allowed to be that of the Roman and Florentine schools ; and among the works produced by them, the fresco paintings of Michael Angelo and Raphael claim the first place. Nearly the same rank may

be assigned to the pictures in oil of the same schools, in which, according to Sir Joshua Reynolds, the full unmixed colours, the distinct blues, reds, and yellows, very much conduce to the general grandeur. The style of these schools is more congenial to sculpture than that of any other, as the great masters by which they were rendered so illustrious, directed their chief attention to the same objects as the sculptors; and either rejected, or very sparingly admitted those captivating charms belonging to their own art, of which the other schools have so much availed themselves. This is particularly the case with Michael Angelo, himself a statuary, and at least as eminent in sculpture as in painting: he worked almost entirely in fresco, the grandeur of which was so suited to his genius, that he is said to have declared after a single trial in oil, that oil-painting was fit only for women. His works, as it may well be supposed, have nothing of sensual attraction, and the same thing may be said in a great measure of

the other masters of his and the Roman school : their colouring, however well adapted to the character of their figures and compositions, however it may satisfy the judgment, has little to please the eye ; and I should conceive that if it were applied to objects divested of grandeur and dignity, the union would appear incongruous, and that the affinity I mentioned between the grand style of painting and sculpture would be still more evident from their being almost equally unfit to represent objects merely picturesque.

The Venetian style, on the other hand, in which there is a greater variety of colours, and those broken, and blended into each other, is in itself extremely attractive from its richness, glow and harmony : it gives a sort of consequence and elevation to objects the most simply picturesque, yet preserves their just character. One painter of this school, must in some measure be considered separately from the rest ; for when Sir Joshua Reynolds speaks of the Venetian style as ornamental

or picturesque, and consequently, according to the principles he has laid down, less suited to grandeur, he makes an exception in favour of Titian; and the grounds on which he makes it, very clearly explain his ideas of the distinction between grandeur and picturesqueness. In comparing a picture of that master with one of Rubens, he opposes the regularity and uniformity, the quiet solemn majesty in the work of the Venetian, to the bustle and animation, and to the picturesque disposition in that of the Flemish Master *.

As the ornamental style of the Venetians, and of Rubens, who formed himself upon it, bears a nearer relation to the beautiful than to the grand, so, on the other hand, the picturesque style where ornament is little used, as in the works of Salvator Rosa, is more nearly related to grandeur. The style of Salvator and that of Rembrandt, though widely different, resemble each other in one particular; in each the strokes of the

* Note 25th on Du Fresnoï.

pencil are often left in the roughest manner; and as nothing can be more adapted to strongly marked picturesque objects and effects, so nothing can be less suited to express beauty, and to convey a general impression of that character. What is the style most truly productive of that general impression, will be much better learnt from the words of Sir Joshua Reynolds, than from any thing I could say; though he had not exactly the same point in view. Speaking of Correggio, he says, “his colour and his mode of finishing, approach nearer to perfection than those of any other painter; the gliding motion of his outline, and the sweetness with which it melts into the ground, the clearness and transparency of his colouring, which stops at that exact medium in which the purity and perfection of taste lies, leave nothing to be wished for.”

If there be any style of painting, which, in contra-distinction to the others, might justly be called the *beautiful* style, that of Correggio has certainly from this descrip-

tion, the best pretensions to the title: but as that word is so commonly used merely to signify excellent, and as in that sense all styles which are suited to the subject, and all pictures which give a just and impressive representation of the objects, (though the most hideous and disgusting) are equally beautiful, Sir Joshua might naturally have declined giving it that name, even supposing him inclined to make such a distinction. He seems, however, in some degree to have indicated it; first by what he says of Guido's manner being particularly adapted to express female beauty and delicacy; and secondly by the whole account of the manner of Correggio; which, it must be observed, he has not classed either with the ornamental, or with the grand style. He remarks indeed in another place, that it has something of the simplicity of the grand style in the breadth of the light and shadow, and the continued flow of outline; but no person, I think, who reads the description of it just quoted, can doubt that having neither the solemnity

and severity of the grand, nor the richness and splendour of the ornamental style, it must have a separate character in a high degree appropriate to what is simply beautiful; and may equally with them (though that is a consideration of much less importance) lay claim to a distinct title.

It is no small confirmation of all that I have advanced in the early part of this chapter, to find that each style of painting corresponds with the characteristic marks of the grand, the beautiful, and the picturesque, in real objects; and I trust that the different shades of distinction that have been noticed, will be found consistent with the general principles. The style of the Venetians and of Pietro da Cortona, will not accord with the grand character, on account of its splendour, its gaiety, and profusion of ornaments; and the reproof of Apelles may shew, that such a profusion is not adapted to beauty, though more congenial to it than to grandeur. Again, the style of Salvator Rosa, Rembrandt, Spag-

nolet, Caravaggio, which have a greater affinity to grandeur, are ill suited to beauty, from qualities notoriously adverse to that character; for who would wish to have the dark shadows of Caravaggio or Rembrandt, or the bold touches of Salvator or Spagnolet, employed on Nymphs and sleeping Cupids? or, on the other hand, the fresh and tender hues of Albano, or the sweetness of Correggio's pencilling and colouring, on executioners, sea-monsters, and banditti?

CHAPTER VII.

THE various effects in painting which have been discussed in the last chapter, naturally lead me to that great principle of the art, breadth of light and shadow. What is called breadth, seems to bear nearly the same relation to light and shadow, as smoothness does to material objects; for as a greater degree of irritation arises from uneven surfaces, and from those most of all which are broken into little inequalities, so all lights and shadows which are interrupted and scattered, are infinitely more irritating than those which

are broad and continued. Every person of the least observation, must have remarked how *broad* the lights and shadows are on a fine evening in nature, or (what is almost the same thing) in a picture of Claude. He must equally have remarked the extreme difference between such lights and shadows, and those which sometimes disgrace the works of painters, in other respects of great excellence; and which prevail in nature, when the sun-beams, refracted and dispersed in every direction by a number of white flickering clouds, create a perpetually shifting glare, and keep the eye in a state of constant irritation. All such accidental effects arising from clouds, though they strongly shew the general principle, and are highly proper to be studied by all lovers of painting or of nature, yet not being subject to our controul, are of less use to improvers; a great deal however is subject to our controul, and I believe we may lay it down as a very general maxim, that in proportion as the objects are scattered, unconnected, and in

patches, the lights and shadows will be so too; and vice versa.

If, for instance, we suppose a continued sweep of hills, either entirely wooded, or entirely bare, to be under the influence of a low cloudless sun---whatever parts are exposed to that sun, will have one broad light upon them; whatever are hid from it, one broad shade. If again we suppose the wood to have been thinned in such a manner, as to have left masses, groups, and single trees, so disposed as to present a pleasing and connected whole, though with detached parts; or the bare hills to have been planted in the same style---the variety of light and shadow will be greatly increased, and the general breadth still be preserved: nor would that breadth be injured if an old ruin, a cottage, or any building of a quiet tint were discovered among the trees. But if the wood were so thinned, as to have a poor, scattered, unconnected appearance; or the hills planted with clumps and detached trees--

the lights and shadows would have the same broken and disjointed effect as the objects themselves: and if to this were added any harsh contrast, such as clumps of firs, and white buildings, the irritation would be greatly increased. In all these cases, the eye, instead of reposing on one broad, connected whole, is stopt and harassed by little disunited, discordant parts. I of course suppose the sun to act on these different objects with equal splendour; for there are some days, when the whole sky is so full of jarring lights, that the shadiest groves and avenues hardly preserve their solemnity; and there are others, when the atmosphere, like the last glazing of a picture, softens into mellowness, whatever is crude throughout the landscape.

This is peculiarly the effect of twilight*;

* Milton, whose eyes seem to have been most sensibly affected by every accident and gradation of light, (and *that* possibly in a great degree from the weakness, and consequently the irritability of those organs) speaks always of twilight with peculiar pleasure. He has even reversed

at that delightful time, even artificial water, however naked, edgy, and tame its banks, will often receive a momentary charm; for then all that is scattered and cutting, all that disgusts a painter's eye, is blended together in one broad and soothing harmony of light and shadow. I have more than once at such a moment, happened to arrive at a place entirely new to me, and have been struck in the highest degree with the appearance of wood, water, and buildings, that seemed to accompany and

what Socrates did by philosophy; he has called up twilight from earth, and placed it in heaven:

From that high mount of God whence light and shade
Spring forth, the face of brightest heaven had chang'd
To grateful twilight.

What is also singular, he has in this passage made shade an essence equally with light, not merely a privation of it; a compliment, never, I believe, paid to shadow before, but which might be expected from his aversion to glare, so frequently, and so strongly expressed:

Hide me from day's *garish* eye.

When the sun begins to fling
His *flaring* beams.

set off each other in the happiest manner ; and I have felt quite impatient to examine all these beauties by day-light :

“ At length the morn, and cold indifference came.”

The charm which held them together, and made them act so powerfully as a whole, had vanished.

It may, perhaps, be said, that the imagination from a few imperfect hints, often forms beauties which have no existence, and that indifference may naturally arise, from those phantoms not being realized. I am far from denying the power of partial concealment and obscurity on the imagination ; but in these cases, the set of objects when seen by twilight, is beautiful as a picture, and would appear highly so, if exactly represented on the canvas ; but in full day-light, the sun, as it were, decomposes what had been so happily mixed together, and separates a striking whole, into detached unimpressive parts.

Nothing, I believe, would be of more service in forming a taste for general effect,

and general composition, than to examine the same scenes in the full distinctness of day, and again after sun-set. In fact, twilight does, what an improver ought to do : it connects what was before scattered ; it fills up staring, meagre vacancies ; it destroys edginess ; and by giving shadow as well as light to water, at once increases both its brilliancy and softness. It must, however, be observed, that twilight, while it takes off the edginess of those objects which are *below* the horizon, more sensibly marks the outline of those which are *above* it, and opposed to the sky ; and consequently discovers the defects, as well as the beauties of their forms. From this circumstance improvers may learn a very useful lesson, that the outline against the sky should be particularly attended to, so that nothing lumpy, meagre, or discordant should be there ; for at all times, in such a situation, the form is made out, but most of all when twilight has melted the other parts together. At that time many varied groups, and elegant shapes of trees, which were

scarcely noticed in the more general diffusion of light, distinctly appear; then too the stubborn clump, which before was but too plainly seen, makes a still fouler blot on the horizon; while there is a glimmering of light he maintains his post, nor yields, till even his blackness is at last confounded in the general blackness of night.

These are the powers and effects of that breadth which I have been describing, and which may justly be considered as a source of visual pleasure distinct from all others; for objects, which in themselves are neither beautiful, nor sublime, nor picturesque, are incidentally made to delight the eye, from their being productive of breadth. This seems to account for the pleasure we receive from many massive, heavy objects, which, when deprived of the effect of that harmonizing principle, and considered singly, are even positively ugly. Such, indeed, is the effect of breadth, that pictures or drawings eminently possessed of it, though they should have no other merit, will al-

ways attract the attention of a cultivated eye; while others where the detail is admirable, but where this master-principle is wanting, will often at the first view, be passed by without notice. The mind, however, requires to be stimulated as well as soothed, and there is in this, as in so many other instances, a strong analogy between painting and music: the first effect of mere breadth of light and shadow is to the eye, what that of mere harmony of sounds is to the ear; both produce a pleasing repose, a calm sober delight, which, if not relieved by something less uniform, soon sinks into distaste and weariness: for repose and sleep, which are often used as synonymous terms, are always nearly allied. But as the principle of harmony must be preserved in the wildest and most eccentric pieces of music, in those where sudden, and quickly varying emotions of the soul are expressed; so must that of breadth be equally attended to in scenes of bustle and seeming confusion; in those where the wildest scenery, or most violent

agitations of nature are represented ; and I am here tempted to parody that frequently quoted passage of Shakspeare, “ in the very torrent, tempest, and whirlwind of the elements, the artist, in painting them, must acquire a breadth that will give them smoothness.”

There is, however, no small difficulty in uniting breadth, with the detail, the splendid variety, and marked character of nature. Claude is admirable in this, as in almost every other respect : with the greatest accuracy of detail, and truth of character, his pictures have the breadth of the simplest washed drawing, or aquatinta print, where little else is expressed, or intended. In a strong light, they are full of interesting and entertaining particulars ; and as twilight comes on, I have often observed in them the same gradual fading of the glimmering landscape, as in real nature.

This art of preserving breadth with detail and brilliancy, has been studied with great success by Teniers, Jan Steen, and many

of the Dutch masters. Ostade's pictures and etchings are among the happiest examples of it; but above all others, the works of that scarce and wonderful master, Gerard Dow. His eye seems to have had a microscopic power in regard to the minute texture of objects (for in his paintings they bear the severe trial of the strongest magnifier) and at the same time the opposite faculty of excluding all particulars with respect to breadth and general effect. His master, Rembrandt, did not attend to minute detail; but by that peculiar and commanding manner, which marked with equal force and justness the leading character of each object, he produced an idea of detail, much beyond what is really expressed. Many of the great Italian masters have done this also, and with a taste, a grandeur, and a nobleness of style, unknown to the inferior schools; though none have exceeded, or perhaps equalled Rembrandt, in truth, force, and effect. But when artists, neglecting the variety of detail, and those characteristic features that well supply

its place, content themselves with *mere* breadth, and propose that as the final object of attainment—their productions, and the interest excited by them, will be, in comparison of the styles I have mentioned, what a metaphysical treatise is to Shakespeare or Fielding; they will be rather illustrations of a principle, than representations of what is real; a sort of abstract idea of nature, not very unlike Crambe's abstract idea of a lord mayor.

As nothing is more flattering to the vanity and indolence of mankind, than the being able to produce a pleasing general effect with little labour or study; so nothing more obstructs the progress of the art, than such a facility. Yet still these abstracts are by no means without their comparative merit, and they have their use as well as their danger; they shew how much may be effected by the mere naked principle, and the great superiority which that alone can give to whatever is formed upon it, over those things which are done on no principle at all; where the separate

objects are set down, as it were, article by article ; and where the confusion of lights so perplexes the eye, that one might suppose the artist had looked at them through a multiplying glass.

I may, perhaps, be thought to have dwelt longer on this article, than the principal design of my book seemed to require ; but although (as I mentioned in a former part) the study of light and shadow appears at first sight to belong exclusively to the painter, yet, like every thing which relates to that charming art, it will be found of infinite service to the improver. Indeed, the violations of this principle of breadth and harmony of light and shadow, are, perhaps, more frequent, and more disgustingly offensive than those of any other.

Many people seem to have a sort of callus over their organs of sight, as others over those of hearing ; and as the callous hearers feel nothing in music but kettledrums and trombones ; so the callous seers can only be moved by strong opposi-

tions of black and white, or by fiery reds. I am therefore so far from laughing at Mr. Locke's blind man for likening scarlet to the sound of a trumpet, that I think he had great reason to pride himself on the discovery.

It might well be supposed, that the natural colour of brick was sufficiently stimulating; but I have seen brick houses painted of so much more flaming a red, that according to Mr. Brown's expression, they put the whole vale in a fever. White, though glaring, has not that hot sultry appearance; and there is such a look of neatness and gaiety in it, that we cannot be surprised, if, where lime is cheap, only one idea should prevail—that of making every thing as white as possible. Wherever this is the case, the whole landscape is full of little spots, which can only be made pleasing to a painter's eye, by their being almost buried in trees: but where a country is without natural wood, and is improved by dint of white-wash and clumps of firs, a painter, were he confined there,

would be absolutely driven to despair; and feel ready to renounce, not only his art, but his eyesight.

One of the most charming effects of sunshine, is its giving to objects, not merely light, but that mellow golden hue so beautiful in itself, and which, when diffused, as in a fine evening, over the whole landscape, creates that rich union and harmony, so enchanting in nature and in Claude: in any scene, whether real or painted, where such harmony prevails, the least discordancy in colour would disturb the eye; but if we suppose a single object of a glaring white to be introduced, the whole attention, in spite of all our efforts to the contrary, will be drawn to that one point; if many such objects be scattered about, the eye will be distracted among them*. Again, (to consider it in another

* From that analogy so often mentioned, it is usual to say, that an object in a picture, or in nature, *is out of tune*. The expression is perfectly just: in music, one such note will invincibly fix our attention upon it, and several distract it; and in either case, it is impossible to enjoy the harmony of the rest. There is, indeed one essential

view) when the sun breaks out in gleams, there is something that delights and surprises, in seeing an object before only visible, lighted up in splendour, and then gradually sinking into shade: but a whitened object is already lighted up; it remains so when every thing has retired into obscurity; it still forces itself into notice, still impudently stares you in the face.

A cottage of a quiet colour half concealed among trees, with its bit of garden, its pales and orchard, is one of the most tranquil and soothing of all rural objects; when the sun strikes upon it, a number of lively picturesque circumstances are brought into view, and it becomes one of the most cheerful: but if cleared round, and whitened, its modest retired character is gone, and is succeeded by a perpetual glare.

difference; a passing note, however false, is quickly over; but a glaring object, is like an eternal holding note held firmly out of tune, and which, in that case well deserves the name an unmusical friend once gave to holding notes in general; "I don't know what you call them," said he, "I mean one of those long noises."

An object of a sober tint unexpectedly gilded by the sun, is like a serious countenance suddenly lighted up by a smile; a whitened object, like the eternal grin of a fool*.

I wish, however, to be understood, that when I speak of white-wash and whitened buildings, I mean that glaring white which is produced by lime alone, or without a sufficient quantity of any lowering ingredient; for there cannot be a greater, or a more immediate improvement, than that of giving to a fiery brick building the tint of a stone one. No person, I believe, has any doubt that stone (such as Bath and Portland, and many others which pass under the general name of free-stone) is the most beautiful material for building;

* Even very white teeth (where excess of whiteness is least to be feared) if seen too much, often give a kind of silly look, that seems to belong to the part itself: nothing can be more characteristic of that effect, than Mr. Walpole's well known expression of "the gentleman with the foolish teeth." Those gentlemen who deal much in pure white-wash, might well be distinguished by the same compliment being paid to their buildings.

and I imagine there is no instance of an architect's having painted such stones white, in order to make them more beautiful; though dingy, or red stone, may sometimes have been painted of a free-stone colour. The true object of imitation seems therefore to be the tint of a beautiful stone; and if those who whiten their buildings, would pique themselves on matching exactly the colour of Bath, or Portland stone, so as to be neither whiter, nor yellower, the greatest neatness and gaiety might prevail, without crudeness or glare.

Such an improvement, however, should chiefly be confined to *fiery* brick; for when brick becomes weather-stained and mossy, it harmonizes with other colours, and has often a richness, mellowness, and variety of tint, infinitely pleasing to a painter's eye: for the cool colour of the greenish moss lowers the fiery quality; while the subdued fire beneath gives a glow of a peculiar character, which the painter would hardly like to exchange for any

uniform colour; much less for the unmixed whiteness of lime.

Besides the glare, there is another circumstance which often renders white-wash extremely offensive to the eye, especially when it is applied to any uneven surface; and that is, a smeared, dirty appearance. This is the case where decayed, or rough stone-work is dabbed with lime, while the dirt is left between the crevices; as likewise where the coarse wood-work that separates the plastered walls of a cottage is brushed over, as well as the smooth walls themselves: in these cases, however, the objects are inconsiderable, and the effect in proportion: but when this pitiful taste is employed upon some ancient castle-like mansion, or the mossy weather-stained tower of an old church, it becomes a sort of sacrilege. Such a building daubed over and plastered, is, next to a painted old woman, the most disgusting of all attempts at improvement; on both, when left in their natural state, time often stamps a pleasing and venerable impression; but when thus

sophisticated, they have neither the freshness of youth, nor the mellow picturesque character of age; and instead of becoming attractive, are only made horribly conspicuous.

I am afraid it will not be easy to check the general passion for distinctness and conspicuity. Each prospect hunter (a very numerous tribe) like the heroic Ajax, forms but one prayer;

Ποιησον δ' αιθρην, δας δ' οφθαλμοισιν ιδεσθαι.

Let them see but clearly, and see enough, they are content; and much may be said in their favour: composition, grouping, breadth and effect of light and shadow, harmony of colours, &c. are comparatively attended to and enjoyed by few; but extensive prospects are the most popular of all views, and their respective superiority is generally decided by the number of churches and counties. Distinctness is therefore the great point; a painter may wish several hills of bad shapes, and thousands of uninteresting

acres, to be covered with one general shade; but to him who is to reckon up his counties, the loss of a black or a white spot, of a clump or a gazabo, is the loss of a voucher.

Then again as the prospect-shewer has great pleasure and vanity in pointing out these vouchers, so the improver, on his side, has full as much in being pointed at; we therefore cannot wonder that so many churches have been converted into these beacons of taste, or that so many hills have been marked with them.

CHAPTER VIII.

I HAVE hitherto endeavoured to trace the picturesque in all that relates to form, and to the effects of light and shade; I have endeavoured to distinguish it from the beautiful, and from the sublime; and to shew the influence of breadth on them all. It now remains to examine how far the same general principles operate with regard to colours.

Mr. Burke's idea of the beautiful in colour seems to me in the highest degree satisfactory, and to correspond with all his other ideas of beauty. I must observe

at the same time, that the *beautiful* in colour, is of a positive and independent nature; whereas the *sublime* in colour is in a great degree relative, and depends on the circumstances and associations by which it is accompanied. A beautiful colour, is a common and just expression; no one hesitates whether he shall give that title to the leaf of a rose, or to the smallest bit of it; but though the deep gloomy tint of the sky before a storm, and its effect on all nature be sublime, no one would call that colour (whether a dark blue, or purple, or whatever it might be) a sublime colour, if simply shewn him without the other accompaniments.

I likewise imagine that no one would call any colour picturesque, if shewn him in the same manner, though many of them might without impropriety be called so: for there are many which having nothing of the freshness and delicacy of beauty, are generally found in objects and scenes highly picturesque, and admirably accord with them. Among these may be reckon-

ed the autumnal hues in all their varieties; the weather-stains, and many of the mosses, lichens, and incrustations on bark and on wood, on stones, old walls, and buildings of every kind; the various gradations in the tints of broken ground, and of the decayed parts in hollow trees. All these, which surely cannot be classed with the fresh greens of spring, with the various hues, at once so fresh and vivid, of its flowers and blossoms, or with those of the clean and healthy stems of young plants, may serve to point out in how many instances picturesque colours as well as forms, arise from age and decay. There is indeed a natural prejudice in our minds against all that is produced by such causes; but whoever attentively observes in nature the deep, rich, and mellow effect of such colours, will hardly be surprised that painters should have been fond of introducing them into their works, and sometimes to the exclusion of those, of which the beauty is universally acknow-

ledged, and is likewise enhanced by every pleasing association.

Autumn, which is metaphorically applied to the decline of human life, when “fallen into the sere, the yellow leaf,” and not the spring, *la primavera, gioventù del anno*, is generally called the painter’s season. And yet there is something so very delightful in the real charms of spring, as well as in the associated ideas of renewed life and vegetation, that it seems a perversion of our natural feelings, when we prefer to all its blooming hopes, the first bodings of the approach of winter. Autumn must therefore have many powerful attractions though of a different kind, and those intimately connected with the art of painting: for which reason as the picturesque, though equally founded in nature with the beautiful, has been more particularly pointed out, illustrated, and, as it were, brought to light by that art, an inquiry into the reasons why autumn, and not spring, is called the painter’s season, will, I imagine, give great additional in-

sight into the distinct characters of the picturesque and the beautiful, especially with regard to colour.

The colours of spring deserve the name of beauty in the truest sense of the word: they have every thing that can give us that idea; freshness, gaiety, and liveliness, with softness and delicacy: their beauty is indeed of all others the most generally acknowledged; so much so, that from them every comparison and illustration of that character is taken. The tints of the flowers and blossoms, in all the nearer views, are clearly the most striking and attractive; but the more general impression is made by the freshness of that vivid green, with which the fields, the woods, and all vegetation begins to be adorned. Besides their freshness, the earlier trees have a remarkable lightness and transparency: their new foliage serves as a decoration, not as a concealment; and through it the forms of their limbs are seen, as those of the human body under a thin

drapery; while a thousand quivering lights play around and amidst their branches in every direction.

But these beauties, which give to spring it's peculiar character, are not those which are best adapted to painting: a general air of lightness is one of the most engaging qualities of that lovely season; yet the lightness, in the earlier part, approaches to thinness; and the transparency of the new foliage, the thousand quivering lights, beautiful as they are in nature, have a tendency to produce a meagre and spotty effect in a picture, where breadth, and broad masses can hardly be dispensed with. The general colour also of spring, when April

Lightly o'er the living scene
Scatters his tenderest freshest green,

though pleasing to every eye in nature, is not equally so on the canvas; especially when scattered over the general scene. Freshness also, it may be remarked, is in

one sense simply coolness, and that idea, in some degree, almost always accompanies it; and though in nature gleams of sunshine, from their real warmth as well as their splendour, give a temporary glow and animation to a landscape entirely green, yet even under the influence of such a glow, that colour would too much preponderate in a picture. Such a style of landscape is therefore rarely attempted; for who would confine himself to cold monotony, when all nature is full of examples of the greatest variety, with the most perfect harmony?

As the green of spring, from its comparative coldness, is upon the whole unfavourable to landscape painting, in like manner its flowers and blossoms, from their too distinct and splendid appearance, are apt to produce a glare and spottiness so destructive of that union, which is the very essence of a picture whether in nature or imitation*.

* White blossoms are in one very material respect, more unfavourable to landscape than any others; as white,

This effect I remember observing in a very striking degree many years ago, on entering Herefordshire when the fruit trees were in blossom: my expectation was much raised, for I had heard that at the time of the blow, the whole country from the Malvern hills looked like a garden. My disappointment was nearly equal to my expectation; the country answered to the description; it did look like a garden, but it made a scattered discordant landscape: the blossoms, so beautiful on a near view, when the different shades and gradations of their colours are distinguished, seemed to have lost all their richness and variety;

by bringing objects too near the eye, disturbs the aerial perspective and the gradation of distance. On this subject I must beg leave to refer the reader to some remarks by Mr. Lock, in Mr. Gilpin's Tour down the Wye, page 97, which I should have inserted here, were not the book in every person's hands.

It is impossible to read these remarks, without regretting that the observations of a mind so capable of enlightening the public, should be withheld from it; a regret which those who have enjoyed the pleasure and advantage of Mr. Lock's conversation, feel in a much higher degree.

and though the scene conveyed to my mind the chearful ideas of fruitfulness and plenty, I could not help feeling how defective it was in all those qualities and principles, on which the painter sets so high a value.

If there be any thing in the universal range of the arts peculiarly required to be a whole, it is a picture. In pieces of music, particular movements may without injury be separated from the whole; in every species of poetry, detached scenes, episodes, stanzas, &c. may be considered and enjoyed by themselves; but in a picture, the forms, tints, lights and shadows, all their combinations, effects, agreements, and oppositions, are at once subjected to the eye: whatever therefore may be the excellence of the several parts, however beautiful the particular colours, however splendid the lights, if they want union, breadth, and harmony, the picture wants it's most essential quality—it is not a whole. According to my notions therefore, it is

chiefly from this circumstance of union and harmony, that the decaying charms of autumn often triumph in the painter's eye, over the fresh and blooming beauties of spring.

It must not, however, be concluded from what has been said, that the painter has no pleasure in any set of objects, unless they form a picture: the charms of spring are universally felt, and he also feels their influence, unless he has narrowed his mind by that art, which ought most to have enlarged it. The true lover of painting, only adds new sources of pleasure, to those which are common to all mankind*: he enjoys equally the general beauties of nature, but from his quick eye, and keen relish for her more happy combinations and effects, he acquires a number of pleasures which may be dwelt upon, when the first

* This is precisely the case with regard to prospects: the painter adds those new sources of pleasure to the general and vague delight which is felt by every spectator. For a further discussion of this subject, vide Letter to Mr. Repton, page 113.

enchanting, but vague delight of spring is diminished.

Such indeed are the charms of reviving nature, such the profusion of fresh, gay, and beautiful colours and of sweets, united with the ideas of fruitfulness, that they absorb for the moment all other considerations: and on a genial day in spring, and in a place where all its charms are displayed, every man, whose mind is not insensible or depraved, must feel the full force of that exclamation of Adam, when he first awakened to the pleasure of existence;

“With fragrance and with joy my heart o’erflow’d.”

I have now mentioned what seem to me the principal beauties and defects of the *earlier* part of spring, at which time, however, the peculiar character of that season is most striking: for as it advances, and the leaves are more and more expanded, they no longer retain their vernal hue, their gloss of youth; and the trees in the height of summer, lose perhaps as much in

the freshness, variety, and lightness of their foliage, as they gain in the general fulness of it, and the superior size of their leaves.

The Midsummer shoot is the first thing that gives relief to the eye, after the sameness of colour which immediately precedes it; in many trees, and in none more than the oak, the effect is singularly beautiful; the old foliage forms a dark back-ground, on which the new appears, relieved and detached in all its freshness and brilliancy: it is spring engrafted upon summer. This effect, however, is confined to the nearer objects; the great general change in all vegetation is produced by the first frosts of autumn: it is then that the more uniform green of summer, is succeeded by a variety of rich glowing tints, which so admirably accord with each other, and form so splendid a mass of colouring; so superior in depth and richness, to that of any other part of the year.

It has often struck me, that the whole system of the Venetian colouring, particularly that of Giorgione and Titian, was

formed upon the tints of autumn; whence their pictures have that golden hue, which gives them such a superiority over all others. Their trees, foregrounds, and every part of their landscapes, have more strongly than those of any other painters, the deep and rich browns of that season: the same general hue prevails in the draperies and even in the flesh of their figures *, which has neither the silver purity of Guido, nor the freshness of Rubens, but a glow perhaps more enchanting than either. Sir Joshua Reynolds has remarked, that the silver purity of Guido is more suited to beauty, than the glowing golden hue of Titian: it was natural for him to mention Guido,

* A strong proof of this is in the Ganymede of Titian in the Colonna palace, to which, by the order of the old Cardinal, Carlo Maratt put a new sky of the same tone as those in his own pictures; and I may say, that none but such a cold insipid artist could have borne to execute, what such gross unfeeling ignorance had commanded. Such a sky would have been a severe trial to the flesh of any warm picture, but it makes that of the Ganymede appear almost black; which certainly would not have been the case, if it had been painted by Rubens, or Correggio.

as being the painter who had most succeeded in beauty of form; but with less of his purity and evenness of tint, there is a freshness in that of Rubens, which would admirably accord with beauty, though there are but few instances in his works of such a union.

I have observed in a former part, that if any one of the qualities which Mr. Burke has so justly ascribed to beauty be more essential than the others, it is freshness; and it is that, which makes the most distinct line of separation between the beautiful and the picturesque in colouring. I should on that account, even if I were not supported by the authority of Sir Joshua Reynolds, be inclined to call the Venetian style of colouring, and that of Mola, of Domenico Feti, and others who have imitated it, the picturesque style, as being formed upon the deep and glowing tints of autumn, and not upon the fresh and delicate colours of spring; and although this Venetian colouring may not upon the whole be so congenial to the

sublime, as the severer styles of the Roman and Florentine schools, yet it is much more so, than the fresh and sensual tints of Rubens*, or the silvery tone of Guido; and in this it accords with the general character of the picturesque, which more readily mixes with the sublime than the beautiful does. Sometimes also, the grandest effects have arisen from the broken tints of the Venetian painters; effects that are displayed in their highest perfection in the back grounds and skies of Titian, and which, in those parts of the picture, could not be produced by the unbroken, and distinct colours of the Roman school. Claude always mixed a much larger proportion of cool, fresh colours in his landscapes, than the Venetians did in theirs. In some of his early pictures, those cool tints prevail too much, and give

* I am here speaking solely of the *tints* of Rubens, especially those of his women and children, without any reference to the forms or the dispositions of his figures, or the richness of his dresses and decorations; on account of which Sir Joshua Reynolds has classed him with the Venetians, as belonging to the ornamental, and, in that respect, the picturesque style.

them a cold sickly appearance; his best works, however, are entirely free from that, as well as the opposite defect, and his authority for the due proportion of cool and warm colours which beauty requires, is as high as any man's can be; for no one studied beauty more diligently, more successfully, or for a greater number of years.

In many of Rubens's works we distinguish the freshness of the early season of the year; and the whole of that well known picture of the Duke of Rutland's, has the spring-like hue of those flowers, which with so gay and spring-like a profusion, yet still with a painter's judgment, he has thrown about it. But when Titian introduces flowers, they are made to accord with his general principle; they are not the children of spring; they seem to belong to a later season: for he spreads over them an autumnal hue and atmosphere, which would make even Rubens's flowers, much more those of a mere flower painter, look raw in comparison.

This leads me to observe, that it is not only the change of vegetation which gives to autumn it's golden hue, but also the atmosphere itself, and the lights and shadows which then prevail. Spring has its light and flitting clouds, with shadows equally flitting and uncertain; refreshing showers, with gay and genial bursts of sunshine, that seem suddenly to call forth and to nourish the young buds and flowers. In autumn all is matured; and the rich hues of the ripened fruits, and of the changing foliage, are rendered still richer by the warm haze, which, on a fine day in that season, spreads the last varnish over every part of the picture. In winter, the trees and woods, from their total loss of foliage, have so lifeless and meagre an appearance, so different from the freshness of spring, the fulness of summer, and the richness of autumn, that many, not insensible to the beauties of scenery at other times, scarcely look at it during that season. But the contracted circle which the sun then describes, however unwished for

on every other consideration, is of great advantage with respect to breadth; for then, even the mid-day lights and shadows, from their horizontal direction, are so striking, and the parts so finely illuminated, and yet so connected and filled up by them, that I have many times forgotten the nakedness of the trees, from admiration of the general masses. In summer, the exact reverse is as often the case; the rich cloathing of the parts makes a faint impression, from the vague and general glare of light without shadow.

CHAPTER IX.

I HAVE endeavoured to the best of my abilities, and according to the observations I have made in a long habit of reflection on the subject, to trace the ideas we have of the picturesque, through the different works of art and nature: and it appears to me, that in all objects of sight, in buildings, trees, water, ground, in the human species, and in other animals, the same general principles uniformly prevail; and that even light and shadow, and colours, have the strongest conformity to

those principles. I have compared both its causes and effects, with those of the sublime and the beautiful; I have shewn its distinctness from them both, and in what that distinctness consists.

I may perhaps, however, be able to throw some additional light on the subject, by considering two qualities the most opposite to beauty—those of ugliness and deformity; by shewing in what points they differ from each other, and under what circumstances they may form a union with other qualities and characters. According to Mr. Burke, those objects are the ugliest, which approach most nearly to angular*; but I think he would scarcely have given that opinion, if he had thought it worth while to investigate so ungrateful a subject as that of ugliness, with the same attention as that of beauty: for if his position be true, the leaves of the plane-tree and the vine, are among the ugliest of the vegetable kingdom.

It seems to me, that mere unmixed ug-

* Sublime and Beautiful, page 217.

liness does not arise from sharp angles, or from any sudden variation ; but rather from that *want* of form, that unshapen lumpish appearance, which, perhaps, no one word exactly expresses ; a quality (if what is negative may be so called) which never can be mistaken for beauty, never can adorn it, and which is equally unconnected with the sublime, and the picturesque. The remains of Grecian sculpture afford us the most generally acknowledged models of beauty of form, in its most exquisitely finished state ; if this be granted, every change that could be made in such models, must be a diminution of the perfect character of beauty, and an approach towards some other. Were an artist, for instance, to model, in any soft material, a head from the Venus or the Apollo, and then by way of experiment to make the nose longer or sharper ; rising more suddenly towards the middle ; or strongly aquiline ; were he to give a striking projection to the eye-brow, or to interrupt by some marked deviation the flowing outline of the face,—though he

would destroy beauty, yet he might create character; and something grand or picturesque, might be produced by such a trial. But let him take the contrary method, let him clog and fill up all those nicely marked variations of which beauty is the result, ugliness, and that only must be the consequence. Should he proceed still further with his experiment, should he twist the mouth, make the nose awry, of a preposterous size, and place warts and carbuncles upon it, or wens and excrescencies on other parts of the face, he would then graft deformity upon ugliness.

Deformity is to ugliness, what picturesqueness is to beauty; though distinct from it, and in many cases arising from opposite causes, it is often mistaken for it, often accompanies it, and greatly heightens its effect. Ugliness alone, is merely disagreeable; by the addition of deformity, it becomes hideous; by that of terror it may become sublime. All these are mixed in the

Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen ademptum.
Deformity in itself, however, has no con-

nection with the sublime ; and when terror can be produced by circumstances of a more elevated character, may even injure it's effect. Death, for instance, is commonly painted as a skeleton ; but Milton, in his famous description, has made no allusion to that deformity (if it may be called so) which is usual in the representation of the king of terrors ; possibly from judging that its distinctness would take off from that mysterious uncertainty, which has rendered his picture so awfully sublime.

The other shape,
 If shape it might be called, which shape had none
 Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb ;
 Or substance might be called, which shadow seem'd,
 For each seem'd either ; black it stood as night,
 Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,
 And shook a deadly dart ; what seem'd his head,
 The likeness of a kingly crown had on.

The union of deformity with beauty, is, from the contrast, more striking than any other ; but it is in the same proportion disgusting : and so far from raising any grand ideas, has rather a tendency to excite those that are ludicrous. Such I think it ap-

pears in the description of Scylla in the *Metamorphoses*, and of Sin in *Paradise Lost*.

As deformity consists of some striking and unnatural deviation from what is usual in the shape of the face or body, or of a similar addition to it, all lines, of whatever description they may be, will equally produce it. Mr. Burke's opinion of flowing lines as producing beauty, and of angular lines as producing ugliness, has been mentioned; and those who are of his way of thinking, must probably object to the Grecian nose as too straight, and as forming too sharp an angle with the rest of the face. Whether the Greek artists were right or not, their practice shews, that, in their opinion, straight lines, and what nearly approach to angles, were not merely compatible with beauty, but that the effect of the whole would thence be more attractive, than by a continual sweep and flow of outline in every part*.

* The application of this to modern gardening is too obvious to be enforced. It is the highest of all authority against

The symmetry and proportion of hills and mountains, are not marked out and ascertained like those of the human figure; but the general principles of beauty and ugliness, of picturesqueness and deformity, are easily to be traced in them, though not in so striking and obvious a manner.

Those hills and mountains which nearly approach to angles, are often called beautiful; seldom, I believe, ugly: and when their size and colour are diminished and softened by distance, they accord with the softest and most pleasing scenes, and compose the distance of some of Claude's most polished landscapes. The *ugliest* forms of hills, if my ideas be just, are those which are lumpish, and, as it were, unformed; such, for instance, as from one of the ugliest and most shapeless animals are called pig-backed. When the summits of any of these are notched into paltry divisions, or have such insignificant risings upon them as appear like knobs or bumps; continued flow of outline, even where beauty of form is the only object.

or when any improver has imitated those knobs or knotches, by means of patches and clumps, they are then both ugly and deformed.

The ugliest ground is that which has neither the beauty of smoothness, verdure, and gentle undulation, nor the picturesqueness of bold and sudden breaks, and varied tints of soil: of such kind is ground that has been disturbed, and left in that unfinished state; as in a rough ploughed field run to sward. Such also are the slimy shores of a flat tide river, or the sides of a mountain stream in summer, composed merely of loose stones, uniformly continued, without any mould or vegetation. The steep shores of rivers, where the tide rises at times to a great height, and leaves promontories of slime; and those on which torrents among the mountains leave huge shapeless heaps of stones, may certainly lay claim to some mixture of deformity; which is often mistaken for another character. Nothing, indeed, is more common than to hear persons who come from a

tame cultivated country (and not those only) mistake barrenness, desolation, and deformity, for grandeur and picturesqueness.*

Deformity in ground, is indeed less obvious than in other objects: deformity seems to be something that did not originally belong to the object in which it exists; something strikingly and unnaturally disagreeable, and not softened by those cir-

* It might be supposed, on the other hand, that the being continually among picturesque scenes, would of itself, and without any assistance from pictures, lead to a distinguishing taste for them. Unfortunately it often leads to a perfect indifference for that style, and to a preference for something directly opposite.

I once walked over a very romantic place, in Wales, with the proprietor, and strongly expressed how much I was struck with it, and among the rest, with several natural cascades. He was quite uneasy at the pleasure I felt, and seemed afraid I should waste my admiration. "Don't stop at these things," said he, "I will shew you by and by one worth seeing." At last we came to a part where the brook was conducted down three long steps of hewn stone: "There," said he, with great triumph, "that was made by Edwards, who built Pont y pridd, and it is reckoned as neat a piece of mason-work as any in the country."

cumstances which often make it picturesque. The side of a smooth green hill, torn by floods, may at first very properly be called deformed; and on the same principle, though not with the same impression, as a gash on a living animal. When the rawness of such a gash in the ground is softened, and in part concealed and ornamented by the effects of time, and the progress of vegetation, deformity, by this usual process, is converted into picturesqueness; and this is the case with quarries, gravel-pits, &c. which at first are deformities, and which in their most picturesque state, are often considered as such by a levelling improver. Large heaps of mould or stones, when they appear strongly, and without any connection or concealment above the surface of the ground, may also at first be considered as deformities, and may equally become picturesque by the same process.

This connection between picturesqueness and deformity cannot be too much studied by improvers, and among other reasons, from motives of œconomy. There are in

many places deep hollows and broken ground not immediately in view, which do not interfere with any sweep of lawn necessary to be kept open : to fill up and level these, would often be difficult and expensive; to dress and adorn them, costs little trouble, or money. Even in the most smooth and polished scenes, they may often be so masked by plantations, and so united with them, as to blend with the general scenery at a distance, and to produce great novelty and variety when approached.

The same distinctions which have been remarked in other objects, are equally observable in trees. The ugliest, are not those in which the branches, whether from nature or accident, make sudden angles, but such as are shapeless from having been long pressed by others, or from having been regularly and repeatedly stripped of their boughs before they were allowed to grow on. Trees that are torn by winds, or shattered by lightning, are deformed, and at first very strikingly so ; and as the crude-

ness of such deformity is gradually softened by new boughs and foliage, they often become in a high degree picturesque.

In buildings and other artificial objects, the same principles operate in the same manner. The ugliest buildings are those which have no feature, no character; those, in short, which most nearly approach to the shape, "if shape it may be called," of a clamp of brick, the ugliness of which no one will dispute. It is melancholy to reflect on the number of houses in this kingdom that seem to have been built on that model; and if they are less ugly, it is chiefly owing to the sharpness of their angles, and to their having, on that account, something more of a decided and finished form. The term which most expresses what is shapeless, is that of a lump: and it generally indicates what is detached from other objects, what is without any variation of parts in itself, or any material difference in length, breadth, or height; a sort of equality that appears best to accord with the monotony of ugliness. Still, however,

as what is most conspicuous, has the most extensive influence whether in good or in bad, a tall building, *cæteris paribus*, may perhaps contend for the palm of ugliness. When I consider the striking natural beauties of such a river as that at Matlock, and the effect of the seven-story buildings that have been raised there, and on other beautiful streams, for cotton manufactories, I am inclined to think that nothing can equal them for the purpose of dis-beautifying an enchanting piece of scenery; and that œconomy had produced, what the greatest ingenuity, if a prize were given for ugliness, could not surpass. They are so placed, that they contaminate the most interesting views; and so tall, that there is no escaping from them in any part: and in that respect they have the same unfortunate advantage over a squat building, that a stripped elm has over a pollard willow. As in buildings there is no general or usual form, to which, as in the human race, we can refer, deformity is in them not so immediately obvious. Many buildings are erected, and then

added to, as more space was wanted, without any plan : in others, the same kind of irregularity is originally designed ; and all these an admirer of pure architecture would probably condemn as deformed, though they are in general considered as only irregular. Where, however, the architecture is regular, if any part be taken away so as to interrupt the symmetry, or any thing added that has no connection with its character, the building is manifestly deformed. I have here supposed that the building, whether a part be taken away, or a part added, is left in an entire and finished state, and that the deformity solely arises from the destruction of its symmetry ; for any breach or chasm in a *finished* building, whether regular or irregular, must always be a deformity. Ruins, therefore, of all kinds, are at first deformed ; and afterwards, by means of vegetation and of various effects of time and accident, become picturesque.

With respect to colours, it appears to me that as transparency is one essential quali-

ty of beauty, so the want of transparency, or what may be termed muddiness, is the most general and efficient cause of ugliness. A colour, for instance, may be harsh, glaring, tawdry, yet please many eyes, and by some be called beautiful : but a muddy colour, no one ever was pleased with, or honoured with that title. If this idea be just, there seems to be as much analogy between the causes of ugliness in colour, and in form, as the two cases could well admit; in the first, ugliness is said to arise from the thickening of what should be pure and transparent; in the second, from clogging and filling up those nicely marked variations, of which beauty and purity of outline are the result. It is hardly necessary to say, that I have here been speaking of colours as considered separately ; not of those numberless beauties and effects, which are produced by their numberless connections and oppositions.

Ugliness, like beauty, has no prominent features : it is in some degree regular and uniform; and at a distance, and even on a

slight inspection, is not immediately striking. Deformity, like picturesqueness, makes a quicker impression; and the moment it appears, strongly rouses the attention. On this principle, ugly music is what is composed according to rule and common proportion; but which has neither that selection of sweet and softly varying melody and modulation, which answers to the beautiful, nor that marked character, those sudden and masterly changes, which correspond with the picturesque. If such music be executed in the same style in which it is composed, it will cause no strong emotion; but if played out of tune, it will become *deformed*, and every such deformity will make the musical hearer start. The enraged musician stops both his ears against the *deformity* of those sounds, which Hogarth has so powerfully conveyed to us through another sense, as almost to justify the bold expression of Æschylus, *δεδορκα κτυπον*. Mere ugliness in visible objects, is looked upon without any violent emotion; but

deformity, in any strong degree, would probably cause the same sort of action in the beholder, as in Hogarth's musician; by making him afraid to trust singly to those means of exclusion which nature has placed over the sight.

The picturesque, when mixed with the sublime, or the beautiful, has been already considered: it will be found as frequently mixed with ugliness; and when so mixed will appear to be perfectly consistent with all that has been mentioned of its effects and qualities. Ugliness, like beauty, in itself is not picturesque, for it has, simply considered, no strongly marked features: but when the last-mentioned character is added either to beauty or to ugliness, they become more striking and varied; and whatever may be the sensations they excite, they always, by means of that addition, more strongly attract the attention. We are amused and occupied by ugly objects, if they be also picturesque, just as we are by a rough, and in other respects

a disagreeable mind, provided it has a marked and peculiar character ; without it, mere outward ugliness, or mere inward rudeness, are simply disagreeable. An ugly man or woman, with an aquiline nose, high cheek bones, beetle brows, and strong lines in every part of the face, is, from these picturesque circumstances, which might all be taken away without destroying ugliness, much more *strikingly* ugly, than a man with no more features than an oyster. It is ugliness of this kind which may very justly be styled picturesque ugliness ; and it is that which has been most frequently represented on the canvas. Those who have been used to admire such picturesque ugliness in painting, will look with pleasure (for we have no other word to express the degree, or character of that sensation) at the original in nature ; and one cannot think slightly of the power and advantage of that art, which makes its admirers often gaze with such delight on some ancient lady, as by the help of a little

vanity might perhaps lead her to mistake the motive*.

As the excess of those qualities which chiefly constitute beauty, produces insipidity; so likewise the excess of those which constitute picturesqueness, produces deformity. These mutual relations may be sufficiently obvious in inanimate objects; yet perhaps they will be more clearly perceived, if we consider them in the human countenance, supposing the *general* form of the countenance to remain the same, and only what may in some measure be considered as the *accompaniments* to be changed.

Suppose then, what is no uncommon style or degree of beauty, a woman with fine features, but the character of whose

* A celebrated anatomist is said to have declared, that he had received in his life more pleasure from *dead*, than from *living* women. This might perhaps be brought as a similar, though a stronger instance of perverted taste; but I never heard of any painter's having made the same declaration with respect to age and youth. Whatever may be the future refinements of painting and anatomy, I believe young and live women, will never have reason to be jealous of old, or dead rivals.

eyes, eyebrows, hair, and complexion, are more striking and showy than delicate: imagine then the same features, with the eyebrows less marked, and both those, and the hair of the head, of a softer texture; the general glow of complexion changed to a more delicate gradation of white and red; the skin more smooth and even, and the eyes of a milder colour and expression: you would by this change take off from the striking, the showy effect; but such a face would have, in a greater degree, that finished delicacy, which even those who might prefer the showy style, would allow to be more in unison with the idea of beauty; and the other would appear comparatively coarse and unfinished. If we go on still further, and suppose hardly any mark of eyebrow; the hair, from the lightness of its colour, and from the silky softness of its quality, giving scarce any idea of roughness; the complexion of a pure, and almost transparent whiteness, with hardly a tinge of red; the eyes of the mildest blue, and the expression equally mild,—you would

then approach very nearly to insipidity, but still without destroying beauty; on the contrary, such a form, when irradiated by a mind of equal sweetness and purity, united with sensibility, has something angelic; and seems further removed from what is earthly and material. This shews how much softness, smoothness, and delicacy, even when carried to an extreme degree, are congenial to beauty: on the other hand, it must be owned, that where the only agreement between such a form and the soul which inhabits it, is want of character and animation, nothing can be more completely vapid than the whole composition.

If we now return to the same point at which we began, and conceive the eyebrows *more* strongly marked; the hair rougher in its effect and quality; the complexion more dusky and gypsy-like; the skin of a coarser grain, with some moles on it; a degree of cast in the eyes, but so slight, as only to give archness and peculiarity of countenance—this, without altering the proportion of the features, would

take off from beauty, what it gave to character and picturesqueness. If we go one step farther, and increase the eyebrows to a preposterous size ; the cast into a squint ; make the skin scarred, and deeply pitted with the small-pox ; the complexion full of spots ; and increase the moles into excrescences—it will plainly appear how close the connection is between beauty and insipidity, and between picturesqueness and deformity, and what “ thin partitions do their bounds divide.”

The whole of this applies most exactly to improvements. The general features of a place remain the same ; the accompaniments only are changed, but with them its character. If the improver, as it usually happens, attend solely to verdure, smoothness, undulation of ground, and flowing lines, the whole will be insipid. If the opposite, and much rarer taste should prevail ; should an improver, by way of being picturesque, make broken ground, pits, and quarries all about his place ; encourage nothing but furze, briars, and thistles ; heap quantities of rude stones on his banks ; or,

to crown all, like Mr. Kent, plant dead trees *—the deformity of such a place would, I believe, be very generally allowed, though the insipidity of the other might not be so readily confessed.

I may here remark, that though picturesqueness and deformity are by their etymology so strictly confined to the sense of seeing, yet there is in the other senses a most exact resemblance to their effects; this is the case, not only in that of hearing, of which so many examples have been given, but in the more contracted senses of tasting and smelling; and the progress I have mentioned, is in them also equally plain and obvious. It can hardly be doubted, that what answers to the beautiful in the sense of tasting, has smoothness and sweetness for its basis, with such a degree of stimulus as enlivens, but does not overbalance those qualities; such, for instance, as in the most delicious fruits and liquors. Take away the stimulus, they become insipid; increase it so as to over-

* Vide Mr. Walpole's Essay on Modern Gardening.

balance those qualities, they then gain a peculiarity of flavour, are eagerly sought after by those who have acquired a relish for them, but are less adapted to the general palate. This corresponds exactly with the picturesque; but if the stimulus be increased beyond that point, none but depraved and vitiated palates will endure, what would be so justly termed deformity in objects of sight*. The sense of smelling has in this, as in all other respects, the closest conformity to that of tasting.

These are the chief arguments that have occurred to me, for giving to the picturesque a distinct character. I have had

* The old maxim of the schools, *de gustibus non est disputandum*, is by many extended to all tastes, and claimed as a sort of privilege not to have any of their's called in question. It is certainly very reasonable, that a man should be allowed to indulge his eye, as well as his palate, in his own way; but if he happened to have a taste for water-gruel without salt, he should not force it upon his guests as the perfection of cookery; or burn their insides, if, like the king of Prussia, he loved nothing but what was spiced enough to turn a living man into a mummy.

the satisfaction of finding many persons high in the public estimation, of my sentiment; and among them, some of the most eminent artists, both professors and diletanti. On the other hand, I must allow, that there are persons whose opinion carries great weight with it, who in reality hold the two words beautiful and picturesque, to be synonymous, though they do not say so in express terms: with those, however, I do not mean to argue at present, though well prepared for battle. Others there are, who allow, indeed, that the words have a different *meaning*, but deny that there is any distinct *character* of the picturesque; to those, before I close this part of my essay, I shall offer a few reflections.

Taking it then for granted that the two terms are not synonymous, the word picturesque, must have some appropriate meaning; and therefore, when any person chooses to call a figure or a scene picturesque, rather than beautiful, he must have some reason for that choice. The definitions which have been given of picturesque, ap-

pear to me very vague and unsatisfactory ; instead of attempting any other, I will do, what perhaps may be of more service in ascertaining its meaning : I will endeavour to account for the introduction of a word into modern languages, which has nothing that in the smallest degree corresponds with it in those of the ancients. The two classes of visible objects which have been distinguished by the titles of the sublime, and the beautiful, have, in all ages, and in all countries, long before the invention of the art of painting, excited the emotions of astonishment, and of pleasure : it seems natural therefore that such objects, when their true character was fully and happily expressed in painting, should at once have been felt and acknowledged to be the same, which had so often struck and pleased them in reality ; and that the emotions, though less powerful, should have been of a similar kind. Such probably was the case, with this difference however ; that the character and qualities of beauty, lose much less of their effect from being re-

presented on the reduced scale of a picture, than those of grandeur, and are likewise more familiar, and more immediately obvious to the bulk of mankind : on which accounts I shall chiefly confine myself to them in the present discussion. These two classes of objects, though so distinct from each other, have one common relation—that of having had at all times a powerful and universal influence ; and in that point of view may be considered as one general division : while another, may in the same manner be formed of those objects which seem to have excited little or no interest or attention, till they were brought into notice, and the principles on which they deserved to excite it, had been pointed out by the revived art of painting, and particularly that of landscape painting. It is well known how vague and licentious a use is made of the word beautiful ; but I think it will be allowed that no qualities so truly accord with our ideas of it, as those which are in a high degree expressive of youth, health and vigour, whether in

animal or vegetable life; the chief of which qualities are smoothness and softness in the surface; fulness and undulation in the outline; symmetry in the parts, and clearness and freshness in the colour. No one can well doubt that these are essential qualities of beauty, who considers what must be the consequence of substituting those of an opposite kind: but if any one should ask (and it has been doubted by a writer of high reputation on these subjects*) whether they are suited to the painter, the question may be answered by another; by asking what is the rank which Guido, Albano and Correggio hold among painters? Raphael, the first name among the moderns, who had grandeur, and dignity of character, more constantly in view than any of the last mentioned painters, was very far from neglecting beauty, or the qualities assigned to it: and if we go back to the ancients, what were the pictures most highly admired while they ex-

* Mr. Gilpin:

isted and whose fame is now as fresh as ever? The Helen of Zeuxis, and the Venus of Apelles, in which no qualities could have had place, except such as accorded with beauty in its strictest sense.

From the ideas which we are well justified in forming to ourselves of those paintings, it seems probable that the delight they produced was immediate and universal; that to see and feel their charms, it did not require any knowledge of pictures, or any habit of examining them (however such knowledge might enhance and refine the pleasure) but only the common sensibility which all must experience, when such objects present themselves in real life. Unfortunately not a trace remains of those, and other exquisite works of that age: but the art since its revival will furnish us with no mean examples; and thanks to that of engraving, which ought to have been coeval with it, the compositions at least of the finest paintings are very generally known. If then we suppose a person of natural sensibility and

discernment, but who had never seen a picture, to have been shewn when they were first painted, the Aurora of Guido, the Nymphs and Cupids of Albano, or the Leda of Correggio, pictures in which nothing but what is youthful and lovely is exhibited, he must readily have acknowledged the whole, and every part to be beautiful; because if he were to see such objects in nature, he would call them so, and view them with delight. The same thing must have happened had he been shewn a picture of Claude, where richly ornamented temples and palaces, were accompanied by trees of elegant forms, and luxuriant foliage, the whole set off by the mild glow of a fine evening; for every thing he saw there, he would wish to see and to dwell upon in reality. But should he have been shewn a set of pictures, in which a number of the principal objects were rough, rugged and broken, with various marks of age and decay, yet without any thing of grandeur or dignity, he must certainly have thought it strange.

that the artists should choose to perpetuate on their canvas such figures, animals, trees, buildings, &c. as he should wish, if he saw them in nature, to remove from his sight. He might afterwards, however, begin to observe, that among objects which to him appeared void of every kind of attraction, the painters had decided reasons of preference ; whether from their strongly marked peculiarity of character, from the variety produced by sudden and irregular deviation, from the manner in which the rugged and broken parts caught the light, and from those lights being often opposed to some deep shadow, or from the rich and mellow tints produced by various stages of decay ; all of which he had passed by without noticing, or had merely thought them ugly, but now began to look at with some interest: he would find at the same time, that there were quite a sufficient number of objects, which the painter would perfectly agree with him in calling ugly, without any addition or qualification.

Such observations as I have just supposed to be made by a single person, must have gradually occurred to a variety of observers during the progress of the art: many of them may have seen the artists at work, and remarked the pleasure they seemed to take in imitating by spirited strokes of the pencil, any rough and broken objects, any strongly marked peculiarity of character, or of light and shadow; and may have observed at the same time, with what comparative slowness and caution they proceeded, when the correct symmetry, the delicate and insensible transitions of colour, and of light and shadow in a beautiful human face or body were to be expressed; and that although the picture, when finished in its highest perfection, would be the pride and glory of the art, such a real object would to all eyes be yet more enchanting. They might thence be led to conclude, that beauty (and grandeur stands upon the same footing) whether real or imitated, is a source of delight

which all men of liberal minds may claim in common with the painter: that mere ugliness is no less disgusting to him, than to the rest of the world; but that a number of objects, neither grand, nor beautiful, nor ugly, are in a manner the peculiar property of the painter and his art, being by them first illustrated, and brought into notice and general observation. When such an idea had once begun to prevail, it was very natural that a word should be invented, and soon be commonly made use of, which discriminated the character of such objects, by their relation to the artist himself, or to his work: we find accordingly that the Italians, among whom painting most flourished, invented the word *pittresco*, which marks the relation to the painter, and which the French, with a slight change, have adopted; while the English use the word *picturesque*, as related to the production. What has just been said, will, I trust, be thought to account with some probability for the origin of the

term, as well as for the distinction of the character, and likewise to point out the reasons, why roughness, sudden deviation, and irregularity, are in a more peculiar manner suited to the painter, than the opposite, and more popular qualities of smoothness, undulation, and symmetry ; and to shew that the picturesque may justly claim a title taken from the art of painting, without having an exclusive reference to it.

If it be true with respect to landscape, that a scene may, and often does exist, in which the qualities of the picturesque, almost exclusively of those of grandeur and of beauty, prevail ; and that persons unacquainted with pictures, either take no interest in such scenes, or even think them ugly, while painters, and lovers of painting, study and admire them : if, on the other hand, a scene may equally exist, in which, as far as the nature of the case will allow, the qualities assigned to the beautiful are alone admitted, and from which those of the picturesque are no less studiously excluded, and that such a scene will at once

give delight to every spectator, to the painter no less than all others, and will, by all, without hesitation, be called beautiful*: if this be true, yet still no distinction of character be allowed to exist—what is it, then, which does create a distinction between any two characters? That I shall now wish to examine; and as the right of the picturesque to a character of its own is called in question, I shall do what is very usual in similar cases, inquire into the right of other characters, whose distinction has hitherto been unquestioned: not for the sake of disputing their right, but of establishing that of the picturesque, by shewing on how much stronger and broader foundations it has been built.

Envy, and Revenge, are by all acknowledged to be distinct characters; nay both of them, as well as many of our better affections, have been so often personified by poets, and imbodyed by painters and sculptors, that we have as little doubt of their distinct figurative exist-

* Letter to Mr. Repton, page 137.

ence, as of the real existence of any of our acquaintance, and almost know them as readily. But from what does their distinction arise?—from their *general* effect on the mind? Certainly not; for their general effect, that which is common to them both, and to others of the same class, is ill-will towards the several objects on which they are exercised: just as the general effect of the sublime, of the beautiful, and of the picturesque, is delight or pleasure of some kind to the eye, to the imagination, or to both. It appears, therefore, from this instance, (and I am inclined to think it universally true) that distinction of character does not arise from general effects, but that we must seek for its origin in particular causes; I am also persuaded, that it is from having pursued the opposite method of reasoning, that the distinction between the beautiful and the picturesque has been denied. The truth of these two positions will be much more evident, if it should be shewn, that the *causes* of envy and revenge

no less plainly mark a *distinction* than their *general effect*, if singly considered, would imply a *unity* of character. The cause of envy, is the merit, reputation, or good fortune of others; that of revenge, an injury received. These seem to me their most obvious and striking causes, and certainly sufficient to distinguish them from each other: but let the most acute metaphysician place in one point of view, whatever may in any way mark the boundaries which separate them; then let his distinctions be compared with those which I have stated to exist between the beautiful and the picturesque, and if they be not more clear, and more strongly marked, why should they have a privilege which is denied to mine?

It has been argued by some, that the sublime, as well as the picturesque, is included in the beautiful; that such distinctions as Mr. Burke and myself have made, are too minute, and refined; and that the picturesque especially, is only a mode of

beauty*. What then are envy and revenge? are they in a less degree modes of hatred? Yet those who are most averse to any distinctions in the other case, would hardly object to it in this, or venture to say that all the useful purposes of language would be answered, if there were only one term, to express every different mode of ill-will towards our fellow-creatures. In the usual progress of society towards refinement, as new distinctions arise, new terms are invented; and it is in a great measure from their abundance, or their scarcity, that the richness, or the poverty of any language is estimated, while its precision no less depends on the accuracy with which they are employed.

It may here very naturally be asked, how it could happen that certain distinctions of characters, which, according to my statement, are plain and manifest, should so long have been very inaccurately made out,

* The difference between the general, and the confined sense of beauty, is discussed in my letter to Mr. Repton, page 135.

and should still by many be called in question; when a number of others, which, as I have asserted, are separated by very thin partitions, have for ages been universally acknowledged. This may easily be accounted for, and the causes of accurate distinction, and of general agreement in the one case, will lead to those of inaccuracy and doubt in the other.

All that concerns our speculative ideas and amusements, all objects of taste, and the principles belonging to them, are thought of by a small part of mankind; the great mass never think of them at all. They are studied in one age, neglected in another, sometimes totally lost; but the variety of human passions and affections, all their most general and manifest effects, and their minutest discriminations, have never ceased to be the involuntary study of all nations and ages. These last have, indeed, at various times been particularly investigated by speculative minds; but every man has occasion to feel but too strongly the truth of their separate causes

and effects, either from his own experience, or that of persons near and dear to him ; nor are we in any case unconcerned spectators where they operate.

Had it in the nature of things been possible, that the same eager, constant, and general interest should have prevailed with respect to objects of taste, the discriminations might have been hardly less numerous, or less generally understood and acknowledged ; and it is by no means impossible, should the distinctions in question continue for a long time together the subject of eager discussion, and likewise of practical application, that new discriminations, and new terms for them may take place. The picturesque might not only be distinguished from the sublime, and from the beautiful, but its union with them, or, what no less frequently occurs, with ugliness, might, when nearly balanced, have an appropriate term. At present, when we talk of a picturesque figure, no one can guess by that expression alone, to which of the other characters it may be allied : whether it be

very handsome, or very ugly ; in gauze and feathers, or in rags. Again, if we speak of a picturesque scene or building, it is equally uncertain whether it be of a hollow lane, a heathy common, an old mill or hovel, or, on the other hand, a scene of rocks and mountains, or the ruin of some ancient castle or temple. We can, indeed, explain what we mean by a few more words ; but whatever enables us to convey our ideas with greater precision and facility, must be a real improvement to language. The Italians do mark the union of beauty with greatness of size or character ; whether in a picture or any other object, by calling it, una *gran-bella* cosa ; I do not mean to say that the term is always very accurately applied, but it shews a strong tendency to such a distinction. But in English, were we to add any part of the word picturesque to handsome, or ugly, or grand, though such composed words would hardly be more uncouth than many which are received into the language, they would be sufficiently so, to place a very formidable barrier

of ridicule between them and common use: to invent new terms, supposing the object of sufficient consequence, is perhaps still more open to ridicule. Mr. Burke decided in favour of the word *delight*, to express a peculiar sense of pleasure arising from a peculiar cause: but the sense to which we are accustomed, is perpetually recurring during his essay; and out of it, the word of course returns to its general meaning: had he risked an entirely new word, and had it withstood the first inevitable onset of ridicule, and grown into use, the English language would have owed one more obligation to one of its greatest benefactors.

PART II.

HAVING now examined the chief qualities that in such various ways render objects interesting; having shewn how much the beauty, spirit, and effect of landscape, real or imitated, depend upon a just degree of variety and intricacy, on a due mixture of rough and smooth in the surface, and of warm and cool in the tints; having shewn too, that the general principles of improving are in reality the same as those of painting—I shall next inquire how far the principles of the last-mentioned art (clearly the best qualified to improve and refine our ideas of nature) have been attended to by improvers: how far also

those who first produced, and those who have continued the present system were capable of applying them, even if they had been convinced of their importance.

It appears from Mr. Walpole's very ingenious and entertaining treatise on modern gardening, that Kent was the first who introduced that so much admired change from the old to the present system; the great leading feature of which change, and the leading character of each style, are very aptly expressed in half a line of Horace:

Mutat, quadrata rotundis.

Formerly, every thing was in squares and parallelograms; now every thing is in segments of circles, and ellipses: the formality still remains; the character of that formality alone is changed. The old canal, for instance, has lost, indeed, its straitness and its angles; but it is become regularly serpentine, and the edges remain as naked and as uniform as before: avenues, vistas,

and strait ridings through woods, are exchanged, for clumps, belts, and circular roads and plantations of every kind: strait alleys in gardens, and the platform of the old terrace, for the curves of the gravel walk. The intention of the new improvers was certainly meritorious; for they meant to banish formality, and to restore nature; but it must be remembered, that strongly marked, distinct, and regular curves, unbroken and undisguised, are hardly less unnatural or formal, though much less grand and simple, than strait lines; and that independently of monotony, the continual and indiscriminate use of such curves, has an appearance of affectation and of studied grace, which always creates disgust.

The old style had indisputably defects and absurdities of the most obvious and striking kind. Kent, therefore, is entitled to the same praise as other reformers, who have broken through narrow, inveterate, long established prejudices; and who, thereby, have prepared the way for more liberal notions, although, by their own prac-

tice and example, they may have substituted other narrow prejudices and absurdities, in the room of those which they proscribed. It must be owned at the same time, that like other reformers, he and his followers demolished without distinction, the costly and magnificent decorations of past times, and all that had long been held in veneration: and among them many things, which still deserved to have been respected and adopted. Such, however is the zeal and enthusiasm with which at the early period of their success, novelties of every kind are received, that the fascination becomes general; and the few who may then see their defects, hardly dare to attack openly, what a multitude is in arms to defend. It is reserved for those, who are further removed from that moment of sudden change, and strong prejudice, to examine the merits and defects of both styles. But how are they to be examined? by those general and unchanging principles, which best enable us to form our judgment of the effect of all visible objects, but which, for

the reasons I before have mentioned, are very commonly called the principles of painting *. These *general* principles, not those peculiar to the *practice* of the art, are, in my idea, universally applicable to every kind of ornamental gardening, in the most confined, as well as the most enlarged sense of the word : my business at present is almost entirely with the latter, with what may be termed the landscapes and the general scenery of the place, whether under the title of grounds, lawn, park, or any other denomination.

With respect to Kent, and his particular mode of improving, I can say but little from my own knowledge, having never seen any works of his that I could be sure had undergone no alteration from any of his successors ; but Mr. Walpole, by a few characteristic anecdotes, has made us perfectly acquainted with the turn of his mind, and the extent of his genius.

A *painter*, who, from being used to *plant* young beeches, introduced them almost

* Page 15.

exclusively into his *landscapes*, and who even in his designs for Spencer, whose scenes were so often laid,

infra l'ombrese piante

D'antica selva,

still kept to his little beeches, must have had a more paltry mind than falls to the common lot: it must also have been as perverse as it was paltry; for as he *painted* trees without form, so he *planted* them without life, and seems to have imagined that circumstance alone would compensate for want of bulk, of age, and of grandeur of character.

I may here observe, that it is almost impossible to remove a large old tree, with all its branches, spurs, and appendages; and without such qualities as greatness of size, joined to an air of grandeur and of high antiquity, a dead tree should seldom if ever be *left*, especially in a conspicuous place; to entitle it to such a station, it should be "majestic even in ruin:" a dead tree which could be moved, would, from that very circumstance, be unfit for moving. Those of Kent's, were probably placed

where they would attract the eye; for it is rare that any improver wishes to conceal his efforts.

If I have spoken thus strongly of a man, who has been celebrated in prose and in verse as the founder of an art almost peculiar to this country, and from which it is supposed to derive no slight degree of glory, I have done it to prevent (as far as it lies in me) the bad effect which too great a veneration for first reformers is sure to produce—that of interesting national vanity, in the continuance and protection of their errors. The task which I have taken upon myself, has been in all ages invidious and unpopular: with regard to Kent, however, I thought it particularly incumbent upon me to shew that he was not one of those great original geniuses, who, like Michael Angelo, seem born to give the world more enlarged and exalted ideas of art; but, on the contrary, that in the art he did profess, and from which he might be supposed to have derived superior lights with respect to that of gardening, his ideas were uncommonly mean, contracted, and perverse. Were I not to

shew this plainly and strongly, and without any affected candour or reserve, it might be said to me with great reason—you assert that a knowledge of the principles of painting is the first qualification for an improver; the founder of English gardening was a professed artist, and yet you object to him!

Kent, it is true, was by profession a painter, as well as an improver; but we may learn from his example, how little a certain degree of mechanical practice will qualify its possessor, to direct the taste of a nation in either of those arts.

The most enlightened judge, both of his own art, and of all that relates to it, is a painter of a liberal and comprehensive mind, who has added extensive observation and reflection, to practical execution; and if in addition to those natural and acquired talents, he likewise possess the power of expressing his ideas clearly and forcibly in words, the most capable of enlightening others: to such a rare combination we owe Sir Joshua Reynolds's dis-

courses, the most original and impressive work that ever was published on his, or possibly on any art. On the other hand, nothing so contracts the mind, as a little practical dexterity, unassisted and uncorrected by general knowledge and observation, and by a study of the great masters. An artist, whose mind has been so contracted, refers every thing to the narrow circle of his own ideas and execution, and wishes to confine within that circle all the rest of mankind*.

Before I enter into any particulars, I will make a few observations on what I look upon as the great general defect of the present system; not as opposed to the old style, which I believe, however, to have been infinitely more free from it, but con-

* I remember a gentleman who played very prettily on the flute, abusing all Handel's music; and to give me every advantage, like a generous adversary, he defied me to name one good chorus of his writing. It may well be supposed that I did not accept the challenge; *c'étoit bien l'embarras des richesses*: and indeed he was right in his own way of considering them, for there is not one that would do well for his instrument.

sidered by itself singly, and without comparison. That defect, the greatest of all, and the most opposite to the principles of painting, is want of connection—a passion for making every thing distinct and separate. All the particular defects which I shall have occasion to notice, in some degree arise from, and tend towards this original sin.

Whoever has examined with attention the landscapes of eminent painters, must have observed how much art and study they have employed, in contriving that all the objects should have a mutual relation; that nothing should be detached in such a manner as to appear totally insulated and unconnected, but that there should be a sort of continuity throughout the whole. He must have remarked how much is effected, where the style of scenery admits of it, by their judicious use of every kind of vegetation, from the loftiest trees through all their different growths, down to the lowest plants; so that nothing should be crowded, nothing bare; no heavy uniform

masses, no meagre and frittered patches. As materials for landscape, they noticed, and often sketched, wherever they met with them, the happiest groups, whether of trees standing alone, or mixed with thickets and underwood; observing the manner in which they accorded with and displayed the character of the ground, and produced intricacy, variety, and connection. All that has just been mentioned, is as much an object of study to the improver, as to the painter: the former, indeed, though in some parts he may preserve the appearance of wildness and of neglect, in others must soften it, and in others again exchange it for the highest degree of neatness: but there is no part where a connection between the different objects is not required, or where a just degree of intricacy and enrichment would interfere with neatness. Every professor, from Kent nearly down to the present time, has proceeded on directly opposite principles: the first impression received from a place where one of them has been employed, is that of general bareness, and

particular heaviness and distinctness; indeed their dislike or neglect of enrichment, variety, intricacy, and above all of connection, is apparent throughout. Water, for instance, particularly requires enrichment; they make it totally naked: the boundaries in the same degree require variety and intricacy; they make them almost regularly circular: and lastly, as it calls for all the improver's art to give connection to the trees in the open parts, they make them completely insulated. One of their first operations is to clear away the humbler trees, those bonds of connection which the painter admires, and which the judicious improver always touches with a cautious hand; for however minute and trifling the small connecting ties and bonds of scenery may appear, they are those by which the more considerable objects in all their different arrangements are combined, and on which their balance, their contrast, and diversity, as well as union depends*.

* It would be hardly less absurd to throw out all the connecting particles in language, as unworthy of being

Water, when accompanied by trees and bushes variously arranged, is often so imperceptibly united with land, that in many places the eye cannot discover the perfect spot and time of their union; yet is no less delighted with that mystery, than with the thousand reflections and intricacies which attend it. What is the effect, when those ties are not suffered to exist? You every where distinguish the exact line of separation; the water is bounded by a distinct and uniform edge of grass; the grass by a similar edge of wood; the trees, and often the house, are distinctly placed upon the grass; all separated from whatever might group with them, or take off from their solitary insulated appearance: in every thing you trace the hand of a mechanic, not the mind of a liberal artist.

I will now proceed to the particulars, and will beg the reader to keep in his mind

mixed with the higher parts of speech: our pages would then be a good deal like our places, when all the conjunctions, prepositions, &c. were cleared away, and the nouns and verbs clumped by themselves.

the ruling principle I have just described, and of which I shall display the different proofs and examples.

No professor of high reputation seems for some time to have appeared after Kent, till at length, that the system might be carried to its *ne plus ultra* (no very distant point) arose the famous Mr. Brown; who has so fixed and determined the forms and lines of clumps, belts, and serpentine canals, and has been so steadily imitated by his followers, that had the improvers been incorporated, their common seal, with a clump, a belt, and a piece of made water, would have fully^d expressed the whole of their science, and have served them for a model as well as a seal*.

* What Ariosto says of a grove of cypressess, has always struck me in looking at made places,

—che parean d'una *stampa* tutte impresse.

They seem “cast in one mould, made in one frame;” so much so, that I have seen places on which large sums had been lavished, so completely out of harmony with the landscape around them, that they gave me the idea of having been made by contract in London, and then sent down in pieces, and put together on the spot.

It is very unfortunate that this great legislator of our national taste, whose laws still remain in force, should not have received from nature, or have acquired by education, more enlarged ideas. Claude Lorraine was bred a pastry-cook, but in every thing that regards his art as a painter, he had an elevated and comprehensive mind; nor in any part of his works can we trace the meanness of his original occupation. Mr. Brown was bred a gardener, and having nothing of the mind, or the eye of a painter, he formed his style (or rather his plan) upon the model of a parterre; and transferred its minute beauties, its little clumps, knots, and patches of flowers, the oval belt that surrounds it, and all its twists and crincum crancums, to the great scale of nature*.

* This ingenious device of magnifying a parterre, calls to my mind a story I heard many years ago. A country parson, in the county where I live, speaking of a gentleman of low stature, but of extremely pompous manners, who had just left the company, exclaimed, in the simplicity and admiration of his heart, "quite grandeur in miniature, I protest!" This compliment reversed, would perfectly

We have, indeed, made but a poor progress, by changing the formal, but simple and majestic avenue, for the thin circular verge called a belt; and the unpretending ugliness of the strait, for the affected sameness of the serpentine canal: but the great distinguishing feature of modern improvement, is the *clump*; a name, which if the first letter were taken away, would most accurately describe its form and effect. Were it made the object of study how to invent something, which under the name of ornament should disfigure whole districts, nothing could be contrived to answer that purpose like a clump. Natural groups, being formed by trees of different ages and sizes, and at different distances from each other, often too by a mixture of those of the largest size with thorns, hollies, and others of inferior growth, are

suit the shreds and patches that are so often stuck about by Mr. Brown and his followers, amidst the noble scenes they disfigure; where they are as contemptible, and as much out of character, as Claude's first edifices in pastry would appear, in the dignified landscapes he has painted.

full of variety in their outlines; and from the same causes, no two groups are exactly alike. But clumps, from the trees being generally of the same age and growth, from their being planted nearly at the same distance in a circular form, and from each tree being equally pressed by his neighbour, are as like each other as so many puddings turned out of one common mould. Natural groups are full of openings and hollows; of trees advancing before, or retiring behind each other; all productive of intricacy, of variety, of deep shadows, and brilliant lights: in walking about them, the form changes at each step; new combinations, new lights and shades, new inlets present themselves in succession. But clumps, like compact bodies of soldiers, resist attacks from all quarters: examine them in every point of view; walk round and round them; no opening, no vacancy, no stragglers*! but in the true military character, *ils font face partout*.

* I remember hearing, that when Mr. Brown was High-Sheriff, some facetious person observing his attendants

The next leading feature to the clump in this circular system, and one which in romantic situations, rivals it in the power of creating deformity, is the belt. Its sphere, however, is more contracted. Clumps, placed like beacons on the summits of hills, alarm the picturesque traveller many miles off, and warn him of his approach to the enemy: the belt lies more in ambush; and the wretch who falls into it, and is obliged to walk the whole round in company with the improver, will allow that a snake with its tail in its mouth, is comparatively but a faint emblem of eternity. It has, indeed, all the sameness and formality of the avenue, to which it has succeeded, without any of its simple grandeur; for though in

straggling, called out to him, "Clump your javelin men." What was intended merely as a piece of ridicule, might have served as a very instructive lesson to the object of it; and have taught Mr. Brown, that such figures should be confined to bodies of men drilled for the purposes of formal parade, and not extended to the loose and airy shapes of vegetation.

an avenue you see the same objects from beginning to end, and in the belt a new set every twenty yards, yet each successive part of this insipid circle is so like the preceding, that though really different, the difference is scarcely felt; and there is nothing that so dulls, and at the same time so irritates the mind, as perpetual change without variety.

The avenue has a most striking effect, from the very circumstance of its being strait; no other figure can give that image of a grand gothic aisle with its natural columns and vaulted roof, the general mass of which fills the eye, while the particular parts insensibly steal from it in a long gradation of perspective*. The broad solemn shade adds a twilight calm to the

* By *long gradation*, I do not mean a great *length* of avenue; I perfectly agree with Mr. Burke, "that colonades and avenues of trees, of a moderate length, are without comparison far grander, than when they are suffered to run to immense distances."—*Sublime and Beautiful*, sect. x. p. 136.

whole, and makes it above all other places, most suited to meditation. To that also its straitness contributes; for when the mind is disposed to turn inwardly on itself, any serpentine line would distract the attention.

All the characteristic beauties of the avenue, its solemn stillness, the religious awe it inspires, are greatly heightened by moon-light. This I once very strongly experienced in approaching a venerable, castle-like mansion, built in the beginning of the 15th century: a few gleams had pierced the deep gloom of the avenue; a large massive tower at the end of it, seen through a long perspective, and half lighted by the uncertain beams of the moon, had a grand mysterious effect. Suddenly a light appeared in this tower—then as suddenly its twinkling vanished—and only the quiet, silvery rays of the moon prevailed; again, more lights quickly shifted to different parts of the building, and the whole scene most forcibly brought to my fancy the times of fairies and chivalry. I was

much hurt to learn from the master of the place, that I might take my leave of the avenue and its romantic effects, for that a death warrant was signed.

The destruction of so many of these venerable approaches, is a fatal consequence of the present excessive horror of strait lines. Sometimes, indeed, avenues do cut through the middle of very beautiful and varied ground, with which the stiffness of their form but ill accords, and where it were greatly to be wished they had never been planted; but being there, it may often be doubtful whether they ought to be destroyed. As to saving a few of the trees, I own I never saw it done with a good effect; they always pointed out the old line, and the spot was haunted by the ghost of the departed avenue. They are, however, not unfrequently planted, where a boundary of wood approaching to a strait line was required*; and in such situations

* At a gentleman's place in Cheshire, there is an avenue of oaks situated much in the manner I have described; Mr. Brown absolutely condemned it; but it now stands,

they furnish a walk of more perfect and continued shade than any other disposition of trees, and what is of no small consequence, they do not interfere with the rest of the place. There is in this last respect an essential difference between the avenue and the belt. When from the avenue you turn either to the right or to the left, the whole country, with all its intricacies and varieties, is open before you: but from the belt there is no escaping; it hems you in on all sides; and if you please yourself with having discovered some wild sequestered part (if such there ever be where a belt-maker has been admitted) or some new pathway, and are in the pleasing uncertainty whereabouts you are, and whither it will lead you, the belt soon appears, and the charm of expectation is over. If you turn to either side, it keeps winding round you; if you break through it, it

a noble monument of the triumph of the natural feelings of the owner, over the narrow and systematic ideas of a professed improver.

catches you at your return ; and the idea of this distinct, unavoidable line of separation, damps all search after novelty. Far different from those magic circles of fairies and enchanters, that gave birth to splendid illusions, to the palaces and gardens of Alcina and Armida, this, like the ring of Angelica, instantly dissipates every illusion, every enchantment.

If ever a belt be allowable, it is where the house is situated in a dead flat, and in a naked ugly country ; there at least it cannot injure any variety of ground, or exclude any distant prospect : it will also be the real boundary to the eye, however uniform, and any exclusion in such cases is a benefit ; but where there is any play of ground, and a descent from the house, it more completely disfigures the place than any other improvement. What most delights us in the intricacy of varied ground, of swelling knolls, and of vallies between them, retiring from the sight in different directions amidst trees or thickets,

is, that according to Hogarth's expression, it leads the eye a kind of wanton chace; this is what he calls the *beauty* of intricacy, and is that which distinguishes what is produced by soft winding shapes, from the more sudden and quickly-varying kind, which arises from abrupt and rugged forms. All this wanton chace, as well as the effects of more wild and picturesque intricacy, is immediately checked by any circular plantation; which never appears to retire from the eye and lose itself in the distance, never admits of partial concealments. Whatever varieties of hills and dales there may be, such a plantation must stiffly cut across them, so that the undulations, and what in seamen's language may be called the *trending* of the ground, cannot in that case be humoured; nor can its playful character be marked by that style of planting, which at once points out, and adds to its beautiful intricacy.

This may serve to shew how impossible it is to plan any forms of plantations that

will suit all places, however it may suit the professor's convenience to establish such a doctrine*.

I have perhaps expressed myself more strongly, and more at length than I otherwise should have done, on the subject of so paltry an invention as that of the belt, from the extreme disgust I felt at seeing its effect in a place, of which the general

* There is in this respect no small degree of resemblance between the art of gardening, and that of medicine, in which, after the general principles have been acquired, the judgment lies in the application; and every case (as an eminent physician observed to me) must be considered as a special case.

This holds precisely in improving, and in both arts the quacks are alike; they have no principles, but only a few nostrums, which they apply indiscriminately to all situations, and all constitutions. Clumps and Belts, pills and drops, are distributed with equal skill; the one plants the right, and clears the left, as the other bleeds the east, and purges the west ward. The best improver or physician, is he who leaves most to nature; who watches and takes advantage of those indications which she points out when left to exert her own powers, but which, when once destroyed or suppressed by an empiric of either kind, present themselves no more.

features are among the noblest in the kingdom. In front, the sea appears in view, embayed amidst islands and promontories, and backed by mountains; between the house and the shore, there is a quick, though not an abrupt descent of ground, on which a judicious improver might have planted different masses of wood, groups, and single trees, more or less dispersed or connected together, with lawns and glades between them, gently leading the eye among their intricacies to the shore. This would have formed a rich and varied foreground to the magnificent distance; and in the approach to the seaside, which ever way you took, would have broken that distance, and have formed in conjunction with it, a number of new and beautiful compositions. One of Mr. Brown's successors has thought differently; and this uncommon display of scenery is disgraced by a belt.

I do not remember the place in its unimproved state; but I was told that there

was a great quantity of wood between the house and the sea, and that the vessels appeared, as at that wonderful place, Mount Edgumbe, sailing over the tops, and gliding among the stems of the trees; if so, this professor

“Has left sad marks of his destructive sway.”

The method of thinning trees which has been adopted by layers out of ground, perfectly corresponds with their method of planting; for in both cases they totally neglect, what in the general sense of the word may be called picturesque effects. Trees of remarkable size, indeed, usually escape; but it is not sufficient to attend to the giant sons of the forest: often the loss of a few trees, nay of a single tree of middling size, is of infinite consequence to the general effect of the place, by making an irreparable breach in the outline of a principal wood; often some of the most beautiful groups, owe the playful variety of their form, and their happy connection

with other groups, to some apparently insignificant, and to many eyes, even ugly trees. To attend to all these niceties of outline, connection, and grouping, would require much time as well as skill, and therefore a more easy and compendious method has been adopted: the different groups are to be cleared round, till they become as clump-like as their untrained natures will allow; and even many of those outside trees which belong to the groups themselves, and to which they owe, not only their beauty, but their security against wind and frost, are cut down without pity, if they will not range according to a prescribed model; till mangled, starved, and cut off from all connection, these unhappy newly drilled corps

“Stand bare and naked, trembling at themselves.”

Even the old avenue, whose branches had intertwined with each other for ages, must undergo this fashionable metamorphosis. The object of the improver is to

break its regularity ; but so far from producing that effect by dividing it into clumps, he could scarcely invent a method by which its regularity would be made so manifest in every direction. When entire, its straitness can only be seen when you look up or down it ; viewed sideways, it has the appearance of a thick mass of wood : if you plant other trees before it, to them it gives consequence, and they give it lightness and variety ; but when it is divided, and you can see through it, and compare the separate clumps with the objects before and behind them, the strait line is apparent from whatever point you view it. In its close array, the avenue is like the Grecian phalanx : each tree, like each soldier, is firmly wedged in between its companions ; its branches, like their spears, present a front impenetrable to all attacks ; but the moment this compact order is broken, their sides become naked and exposed. Mr. Brown, like another Paulus Æmilius, has broken the firm embodied ranks of many a noble phalanx of

trees, and in this, perhaps, more than in any other instance, he has shewn how far the perversion of taste may be carried; for at the very time when he deprived the avenue of its shade and its solemn grandeur, he increased its formality.

CHAPTER II.

IT is in the arrangement and management of trees, that the great art of improvement consists : earth is too cumbrous and lumpish for man to contend much with, and when worked upon, its effects are flat and dead like its nature. But trees, detaching themselves at once from the surface, and rising boldly into the air, have a more lively and immediate effect on the eye : they alone, form a canopy over us, and a varied frame to all other objects ; which they admit, exclude, and group with, almost at the will of the improver. In

beauty, they not only far excel every thing of inanimate nature, but their beauty is complete and perfect in itself; while that of almost every other object requires their assistance. Without them, the most varied inequality of ground is uninteresting: rocks, though their variety is of a more striking kind, and often united with grandeur, still want their accompaniment: and although in the higher parts of mountains trees are neither expected nor required, yet if there be none in any part of the view, a scene of mere barrenness and desolation, however grand, soon fatigues the eye. Water in all its characters of brooks, rivers, lakes, and water-falls, appears cold and naked without them: the sea alone forms an exception, its sublimity absorbing all idea of lesser ornaments; for no one can view the foam, the gulphs, the impetuous motion of that world of waters, without a deep impression of its destructive and irresistible power. But sublimity is not its only character; for after that first awful sensation is weakened by use, the infinite variety in

the forms of the waves, in their light and shadow, in the dashing of their spray, and above all, the perpetual change of motion, continue to amuse the eye in detail, as much as the grandeur of the whole possessed the mind. It is in this that it differs, not only from motionless objects, but even from rivers and cataracts, however diversified in their parts: in them, the spectator sees no change from what he saw at first; the same breaks in the current, the same falls continue; but the intricacies and varieties of waves breaking against rocks, are as endless as their motion.

There are situations where trees succeed near the sea, but it is only where it is landlocked; and in such cases, though their combination, as at Mount Edgcumbe, is no less beautiful than uncommon, the sea itself loses its grand imposing character, and puts on something of the appearance of a lake. Then it is that trees are necessary; for a lake bounded by naked ground, or by naked rocks, forms a dull or a rude

landscape: but let one change only be made, let the sea break against those rocks, and trees will no longer be thought of.

As, in addition to its sublime character, the intricacy and variety of its waves render the sea independent of trees, so those are the two qualities in trees, which render them of such importance in all inland situations, especially in those of a tame unvaried character; and so great is their power of correcting monotony, that, by their means, even a dead flat may become highly interesting.

The infinite *variety* of their forms, tints, and light and shade, must strike every body; the quality of *intricacy* they possess, in as high a degree, and in a more exclusive and peculiar manner. Take a single tree only, and consider it in this point of view. It is composed of millions of boughs, sprays, and leaves, intermixed with, and crossing each other in as many directions; while through the various openings, the eye still discovers new and infinite combina-

tions of them : yet in this labyrinth of intricacy, there is no unpleasant confusion ; the general effect is as simple, as the detail is complicate. Ground, rocks, and buildings, where the parts are much broken, become fantastic and trifling ; besides, they have not that loose pliant texture so well adapted to partial concealment : a tree, therefore, is perhaps the only object where a grand whole, or at least what is most conspicuous in it, is chiefly composed of innumerable minute and distinct parts.

To shew how much those who ought to be the best judges, consider the qualities I have mentioned, no tree, however large and vigorous, however luxuriant the foliage, will highly interest the painter, if it present one uniform unbroken mass of leaves ; while others, not only inferior in size, and in thickness of foliage, but of forms which might induce some improvers to cut them down, will attract and fix their attention. The reasons of this preference are obvious ; but as on these reasons, according to the ideas I have formed, the

whole system of planting, pruning, and thinning, for the purpose of ornament, depends, I must be allowed to dwell a little longer on them.

In a tree, of which the foliage is every where full and unbroken, there can be but little variety of *form*: then as the sun strikes only on the surface, neither can there be much variety of *light* and *shade*: and as the apparent colour of objects changes according to the different degrees of light or of shade in which they are placed, there can be as little variety of *tint* *: and lastly, as there are none of those openings that excite and nourish curiosity, but the eye is every where opposed by one uniform leafy skreen, there can be as little intricacy as variety. What is here said of a *single* tree is equally true of every massy *combination* of them, and appears to me to account perfectly for the bad effect of clumps, and of all plantations and woods where the trees grow close together: in all these cases

* Lux varium vivumque dabit, nullum umbra colorem.

Du Fresnoy.

the effect is in one respect much worse; we are disposed to admire the bulk of a single tree, the *ipse nemus*, though its form *should* be heavy; but there is a meanness, as well as a heaviness, in the appearance of a lumpy mass, produced by a multitude of little stems.

What are the qualities that painters *do* admire in single trees, groups, and woods, may easily be concluded from what they do not; the detail would be infinite, for luckily where art does not interfere, the absolute exclusions are few. If their taste be preferable to that of gardeners, it is clear that there is something radically bad in the usual method of making and managing plantations; it otherwise would never happen, that the woods and arrangements of trees which they are least disposed to admire, should be those made for the express purpose of ornament. Under that idea, the spontaneous trees of the country are often excluded as too common, or admitted in small proportions; whilst others of peculiar form and colour, take

place of oak and beech. But of whatever trees the *established* woods of the country are composed, the same, I think, should prevail in the *new* plantations, or those two grand principles, harmony, and unity of character, will be destroyed. It is very usual, however, when there happens to be a vacant space between two woods, to fill it up with firs, larches, &c.; if this be done with the idea of *connecting* those woods, which *should* be the object, nothing can be more opposite than the effect: even plantations of the same species, require time to make them accord with the old growths; but such harsh and sudden contrasts of form and colour, make these insertions for ever appear like so many awkward pieces of patch-work; and surely if a man were reduced to the necessity of having his coat pieced, he would wish to have the joinings concealed, and the colour matched, and not to be made a harlequin*.

* It is not enough that trees should be naturalized to the climate, they must also be naturalized to the landscape,

Trees of a dark colour, or a spire-like form, though when planted in patches they have such a motley appearance, may be so grouped with the prevailing trees of the country, as to produce infinite richness and variety, and yet seem part of the original design; but it appears to be an established rule, that plantations made for ornament, should, both in form and substance, be as distinct as possible from the woods of the country; so that no one may doubt an instant, what are the parts which have been improved. Instead, therefore, of giving to

and mixed and incorporated with the natives. A patch of foreign trees planted by themselves in the out-skirts of a wood, or in some open corner of it, mix with the natives, much like a group of young Englishmen at an Italian conversazione. But when some plant of foreign growth appears to spring up by accident, and shoots out its beautiful, but less familiar foliage among our natural trees, it has the same pleasing effect, as when a beautiful and amiable foreigner has acquired our language and manners so as to converse with the freedom of a native, yet retains enough of original accent and character, to give a peculiar grace and zest to all her words and actions.

nature * that “ rich, ample, and flowing robe which she *should* wear on her throned eminence,” instead of “ hill united to hill with sweeping train of forest, with prodigality of shade,” she is curtailed of her fair proportions, pinched and squeezed into shape ; and the prim squat clump is perked up exactly on the top of every eminence. Sometimes, however, where the extent is so great, that common sized clumps would make no figure, it has been very ingeniously contrived to consolidate (and I am sure the word is not improperly used) several of them in one larger lump, and these condensed, unwieldly masses, are at random stuck about the grounds.

In many such plantations the trees

* Mr. Mason’s Poem on Modern Gardening, is so well known to all who have any taste for the subject, or for poetry in general, that it is hardly necessary to say, that the words between the inverted commas are chiefly taken from it. In the part from which I have taken these two passages, he has pointed out the noblest style of planting, in a style of poetry no less noble and elevated.

which principally shew themselves are larches, and they produce the most compleat monotony of outline. The summits of round-headed trees, especially the oak, vary in each tree; but there can only be one form in those of pointed trees*: on that account, wherever ornament is the aim, great care ought to be taken that the general outline be round and full, and only partially broken and varied by pointed trees, and that too many of those should not rise above the others, so as principally to catch the eye. Now wherever larches are mixed, even in a small proportion, over the whole of a plantation, the quickness of their growth, their pointed tops, and the peculiarity of their colour, make them so conspicuous, that the whole wood seems to consist of nothing else.

I have seen two places on a very large scale laid out by a professed improver of high reputation†, where all the defects

* *Linea recta velut sola est, & mille recurvæ.*

† Some persons have imagined, that by a professor of

I have mentioned were most strikingly exemplified. Whatever might be the other trees of which the separate clumps consisted, nothing was seen above but larches; from the multitude of their sharp points, the whole country appeared *en herisson*, and had much the same degree of resemblance to natural scenery, as one of the old military plans with scattered platoons of spearmen, has to a print after Claude or Poussin. With all my admiration of trees, I had rather be without them, than have them so disposed: indeed, I have often seen hills, where the outline, the swellings, and the deep hollows were so striking, and where the surface was so varied by the mixture of smooth close-bitten turf, with the rich, though short cloathing of fern, heath, or furze, and by the different openings and sheep tracks

high reputation I must have meant Mr. Repton; but these two places, which were laid out before he took to the profession, clearly prove that it did not then require his talents to gain a high reputation: I hope in future it will be less easily acquired.

among them, that I should have been sorry to have had the whole covered with the finest wood; nay, I could hardly have wished for trees the most happily disposed, and of course should have dreaded those which are usually placed there by art. An improver has rarely such dread: in general the first idea that strikes him, is that of distinguishing his property; nor is he easy till he has put his *pitch-mark* on all the summits. Indeed this gratifies his desire of celebrity, by exciting the curiosity and admiration of the vulgar; and travellers of taste will naturally be provoked to enquire, though from another motive, to whom those unfortunate hills belong.

It is melancholy to compare the slow progress of beauty, with the upstart growth of deformity; trees and woods planted in the most judicious style, will not for years strongly attract the painter's notice, though the planter, like a fond parent, feels the greatest tenderness for his children, at the time they are least interesting to others*.

* Madame de Sevigné, whose maternal tenderness seems

But to the deformer (a name too often synonymous to the improver) it is not necessary that his trees should have attained their full growth; as soon as he has planted them in his round fences, his principal work is done; the eye which used to follow with delight the bold sweep of outline, and all the playful undulation of ground, finds itself suddenly checked and its progress stopt, even by these embryo clumps. They have the same effect on the great features of nature, as an excrescence on those of the human face; in which, though the proportion of one feature to another greatly varies in different persons, yet these differences, like others of a similar kind in inanimate nature, give variety of character without disturbing the general accord of the parts: but let there be a wart or a pimple on any prominent feature—no dignity or beauty of countenance can detach the attention from it; that little, round, to have extended itself to her plantations, says; “*Je fais jeter a bas de grands arbres, parce qu’ils font ombrage, ou qu’ils incommodent mes jeunes enfants.*”

distinct lump, while it disgusts the eye, has a fascinating power of fixing it on its own deformity. This is precisely the effect of clumps: the beauty or grandeur of the surrounding parts only serve to make them more horribly conspicuous; and the dark tint of the Scotch fir, of which they are generally composed, as it separates them by colour, as well as by form, from every other object, adds the last finish.

But even large plantations of firs, when they are not the natural and the prevailing trees of the country, have a harsh and heavy look, from their not harmonizing with the rest of the landscape; and this is particularly the case, when, as it sometimes happens, one side of a valley is planted solely with firs, the other with deciduous trees. The common expressions of a *heavy* colour, or a *heavy* form, shew that the eye feels an impression from objects analogous to that of weight: thence arises the necessity of preserving what may be called a proper balance, so that the quantity of dark colour on one side, or in one part of

the scene, should not in any striking degree outweigh the other ; and this is a very material point in the art of painting. If in a picture, the one half were to be light and airy both in the forms and in the tints, and the other half one black heavy lump, the most ignorant person would probably be displeased, though he might not know upon what principle, with the want of *balance*, and of harmony ; for those harsh discordant forms and colours, not only act more forcibly from being brought together within a small compass, but also, because in painting they are not authorized by fashion, or rendered familiar by custom.

One principal cause of the extreme heaviness of fir plantations is their closeness. A planter very naturally wishes to produce some appearance of wood as soon as possible ; he therefore sets his trees very near together, and so they generally remain, for he has seldom the resolution to thin them sufficiently : they are consequently all drawn up together nearly to the same height ; and as their heads touch each

other, no variety, no distinction of form can exist, but the whole is one enormous, unbroken, unvaried mass of black. Its appearance is indeed so uniformly dead and heavy, that instead of those cheering ideas which arise from the fresh luxuriant foliage, and the lighter tints of deciduous trees, it has something of that dreary image, that extinction of form and colour, which Milton felt from blindness; when he who had viewed objects with a painter's eye, as he described them with a poet's fire, was

Presented with an universal blank
Of nature's works.

The inside of these plantations fully answers to the dreary appearance of the outside. Of all dismal scenes it seems to me the most likely for a man to hang himself in, though he would find some difficulty in the execution; for, amidst the endless multitude of stems, there is rarely a single side branch to which a rope could be fastened. The whole wood is a col-

lection of tall naked poles, with a few ragged boughs near the top; above—one uniform rusty cope, seen through decayed and decaying sprays and branches; below—the soil parched and blasted with the baleful droppings; hardly a plant or a blade of grass, nothing that can give an idea of life, or vegetation. Even its gloom is without solemnity; it is only dull and dismal; and what light there is, like that of hell,

“ Serves only to discover scenes of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades.”

In a grove where the trees have had room to spread (and in that case I am very far from excluding the Scotch fir or any of the pines) the gloom has a character of solemn grandeur; that grandeur arises from the broad and varied canopy over head, from the small number, and great size of the trunks by which the canopy is supported*, and

* This circumstance seems to have struck Virgil in the case of a single tree :

Media ipsa, ingentem sustinet umbram.

from the large undisturbed spaces between them ; but a close wood of firs, is, perhaps, the only one from which the opposite qualities of cheerfulness and grandeur, of symmetry and variety, are equally excluded ; and in which, though the sight is perplexed and harassed by the confusion of petty objects, there is not the smallest degree of intricacy.

Firs, planted and left in the same close array, are very commonly made use of as screens and boundaries ; but as the lower part is of most consequence where concealment is the object, they are, for the reasons I mentioned, before, the most improper trees for that purpose. I will, however, suppose them to be exactly in the condition the planter would wish ; that the outer boughs, on which alone he can place any dependence, were preserved from animals ; and that though planted along the brow of a hill, they had escaped from wind and snow, and the many accidents to which they are exposed in bleak situa-

tions; they would then exactly answer to that admirable description of Mr. Mason;

“ The Scottish fir.

In murky file rears his inglorious head,’

And blots the fair horizon.”

Nothing can be more accurately, or more forcibly expressed, or raise a juster image in the mind. Every thick unbroken mass of black, especially when it can be compared with softer tints, is a *blot*; and has the same effect on the horizon in nature, as if a dab of ink were thrown upon that of a Claude. This, however, is viewing it in its most favourable state, when at least it answers the purpose of a screen, though a heavy one: but it happens full as often, that the outer boughs do not reach above half way down; and then, besides the long, black, even line which cuts the horizon at the top, there is at bottom a streak of glaring light that pierces every where through the meagre and naked poles, and shews distinctly the poverty and thinness of the boundary. Many a common

hedge with a few trees in it, that has been suffered to grow wild, is a much more varied and effectual screen; but there *are* hedges, where yews and hollies are mixed with trees and thorns, so thick from the ground upwards, so diversified in their outline, in the tints, and in the light and shade, that the eye, which dwells on them with pleasure, is perfectly deceived; and can neither see through them, nor discover (hardly even suspect) their want of depth.

This striking contrast between a mere hedge, and trees planted for the express purpose of concealment and beauty, affords a very useful hint not only for screens and boundaries, but for every sort of plantation, where variety and intricacy, not mere profit, are the objects. We may learn from it that concealment, without which there can be no intricacy, cannot well be produced without a mixture of the smaller growths, such as thorns and hollies; which being naturally bushy, fill up the lower parts where the larger trees are apt to be bare. We may also learn in what manner

such a mixture produces variety of outline; for in a hedge such as I have described, the lower growths do not prevent the higher from extending their heads, while at the same time by their different degrees of height, more or less approaching to that of the timber trees, they accompany and group with them, and prevent that formal disconnected appearance, which hedgerow trees left alone, after every thing has been completely cleared from them, almost always present.

If by such means a mere single line of hedge becomes an effectual and varied screen, of course a deeper plantation conducted on the same principles would be a much more varied boundary, and more impenetrable to the eye; and it seems to me, that if this method were followed in all ornamental plantations, it would, in a great measure, obviate the bad effects of their being left too close, either from foolish fondness, or neglect. Suppose, for instance, that instead of the usual method of making an evergreen plantation of firs

only, and those stuck close together, the firs were planted at various distances of ten, twelve, or more yards asunder, and that the spaces between them were filled with the lower evergreens. All these would for some years grow up together, till at length the firs would shoot above them all, and find nothing afterwards to check their growth in any direction. Suppose such a wood upon the largest scale, to be left to itself, and not a bough cut for twenty, thirty, any number of years; and that then it came into the hands of a person, who wished to give variety to this rich, but uniform mass. He might in some parts choose to have an open grove of firs only; in that case he would only have to clear away all the lower evergreens, and the firs which remained, from the free unconstrained growth of their heads, would appear as if they had been planted with that design. In other parts he might make that beautiful forest-like mixture of open grove, with thickets and loosely scattered trees; of lawns and glades of various shapes and

dimensions, variously bounded. Sometimes he might find the ground scooped out into a deep hollow, forming a sort of amphitheatre; and there, in order to shew its general shape, and yet preserve its sequestered character, he might only make a partial clearing; when all that can give intricacy, variety, and retirement to a spot of this kind, would be ready to his hands.

It may indeed be objected, and not without reason, that this evergreen underwood will have grown so close, that when thinned, the plants which are left will look bare; and bare they will look, for such must necessarily be the effect of leaving any trees too close. There are, however, several reasons why it is of less consequence in this case. The first and most material is, that the great outline of the wood formed by the highest trees, would not be affected: another is, that these lower trees being of various growths, some will have outstripped their fellows, in the same proportion as the firs outstripped them; and, consequently, their heads will

have had room to spread, and form a gradation from the highest firs, to the lowest underwood. Again, many of these evergreens of lower growth succeed well under the drip of taller trees, and also (to use the figurative expression of nursery-men) love the knife: by the pruning of some, therefore, and cutting down of others, the bare parts of the tallest would in a short time be covered; and the whole of such a wood might be divided at pleasure into openings and groups, differing in form, in size, and in degrees of concealment; from skirtings of the loosest texture, to the closest and most impenetrable thickets.

This method is equally good in making plantations of deciduous trees, though not in the same degree necessary as in those of firs; and though I have only mentioned *ornamental* plantations, yet, I believe, if thorns were always mixed with oak, beech, &c. besides their use in preventing the forest trees from being planted too close to each other, they would by no means be unprofitable. If they were taken out before

they were too large to be moved easily, their use for hedges, and their ready sale for that purpose, is well known; if left longer, they are particularly useful for filling up gaps, where smaller plants would be stifled; and if they remained, they would always make excellent hedge-wood, and answer all the common purposes of underwood. For ornament, exotics of different growths might be added; among which the various species of thorns alone, would furnish a considerable list.

It is not meant that the largest growths should *never* be planted near each other; some of the most beautiful groups are often formed by such a close junction, but not when they have all been planted at the same time, and drawn up together. A judicious improver will know when, and how to deviate from any method, however generally good.

There are few operations in improvement more pleasant, than that of opening gradually a scene, where the materials are not unfit for use, but only too abundant:

the case is very different where they are absolutely spoiled, as in a thick wood of firs. In that, there is no room for selection; no exercise of the judgment in arranging the groups, masses, or single trees; no power of renewing vegetation by pruning or cutting down; no hope of producing the smallest intricacy or variety. If one bare pole be removed, that behind differs from it so little, that one might exclaim with Macbeth,

“Thy air

“Is like the first—a third is like the former—

“Horrible sight!”—

and so they would unvariedly go on,

“Tho’ their line

“Stretch’d out to the crack of doom.”

In contrasting the character of a close wood of firs only, with that of the mixed evergreen plantation which I have described, I do not think I have at all exaggerated the ugliness, and the incorrigible sameness of the one, and the variety and beauty of which the other is capable. I

mean, however, *that* variety which arises from the *manner* in which these evergreens may be disposed, not from the number of distinct species. I have indeed often observed in forests, so many combinations and picturesque effects produced merely by oak, beech, thorns, and hollies, that one could hardly wish for more variety; on the other hand I have no less frequently found the most perfect monotony in point of composition and effect, where there was the greatest variety of trees: it put me in mind of what is mentioned of the more ancient Greek painters; that with only four colours, they did, what in the more degenerate days of the art, could not be performed with all the aid of chemistry.

Variety, of which the true end is to relieve the eye, not to perplex it, does not consist in the diversity of separate objects, but in that of their effects when combined together; in diversity of composition, and of character. Many think, however, they have obtained that grand object, when

they have exhibited in one body all the hard names of the Linnæan system*; but when as many different plants as can well be got together, are exhibited in *every* shrubbery, or in *every* plantation, the result is a sameness of a different kind, but not less truly a sameness, than would arise from there being no diversity at all; for there is no having variety of character, without a certain distinctness, without certain marked features on which the eye can dwell.

In forests and woody commons, we sometimes come from a part where hollies had chiefly prevailed, to another where junipers

* In a botanical light, such a collection is extremely curious and entertaining; but it is about as good a specimen of variety in landscape, as a line of Lilly's grammar would be of variety in poetry:

Et postis, vectis, vermis societur et axis.

A collection of hardy exotics may also be considered as a very valuable part of the improver's pallet, and may suggest many new and harmonious combinations of colours; but then he must not call the pallet a picture.

or yews are the principal evergreens ; and where, perhaps, there is the same sort of change in the deciduous underwood. This strikes us with a new impression ; but mix them equally together in all parts, and diversity becomes a source of monotony.

One great cause of the superior variety and richness of unimproved parks and forests, when compared with lawns and dressed grounds, and of their being so much more admired by painters, is, that the trees and groups are seldom totally alone and unconnected ; that they seldom exhibit either of those two principal defects in the composition of landscapes, the opposite extremes of being too crowded, or too scattered : whereas the clump is a most unhappy union of them both ; it is scattered in respect to the general composition, and close and lumpish when considered by itself.

Single trees, when they stand alone and are round-headed, have some tendency towards the defects of the clump ; and it is

worthy of remark, that in the *Liber Veritatis* of Claude, consisting of nearly two hundred drawings, there are not, I believe, more than three single trees. This is one strong proof, which the works of other painters would fully confirm, that those who most studied the effect of visible objects, attended infinitely less to their distinct individual forms, than to their grouping and connection.

The great sources of all that painters admire in natural scenery, are accident and neglect*; for in forests and old parks, the rough bushes nurse up young trees, and grow up with them; and thence arises that infinite

* I remember hearing what I thought a just criticism on a part of Mr. Crabbe's poem of the *Library*: he has there personified *Neglect*, and given her the *active* employment of spreading dust on books of ancient chivalry. But in producing picturesque effects, I begin to think her *vis inertia* is in many cases a very powerful agent.

Should this criticism induce any person who had not read the *Library*, to look at the part I have mentioned, he will soon forget his motive for looking at it, in his admiration of one of the most animated, and highly poetical descriptions I ever read.

variety of openings, of inlets, of glades, of forms of trees, &c. The rudeness of many such scenes might be softened by a judicious style and degree of clearing and smoothing, without injuring, what might be successfully imitated in the most polished parts, their varied and intricate character.

Lawns are very commonly made by laying together a number of fields and meadows, which are generally cleared of every thing but the timber. When the hedges are taken away, it must be a great piece of luck, if the trees which were in them, and those which were scattered about the open parts, should so combine together, as to form a connected whole. The case is much more desperate, when a layer out of grounds has persuaded the owner,

To improve an old family seat,
By *lawn*ing a hundred good acres of *wheat* ;

for the insides of *arable* grounds have seldom any trees in them, and the hedges but few ; and then clumps and belts are the usual resources.

Such an improvement, however, is greatly admired ; and I have frequently heard it wondered at, that a green lawn, which is so charming in nature, should look so ill when painted. It must be owned, that it does look miserably flat and insipid in a picture ; but that is not entirely the fault of the painter, for it would be difficult to invent any thing more wretchedly insipid, than one uniform green surface dotted with clumps, and surrounded by a belt. If, however, instead of such accompaniments, we supposed a lawn to be adorned with trees disposed in the happiest manner, still I believe it would scarcely be possible to make a long extent of smooth uniform green interesting in a picture : such a scene, even painted by a Claude, would want precisely what it wants in nature ; that happy union of warm and cool, of smooth and rough, of picturesque and beautiful, which makes the charm of his best compositions.

But though such scenes as the great masters made choice of, are much more

varied and animated than one of mere grass can be, yet I am very far from wishing the peculiar character of lawns to be destroyed: the study of the principles of painting would be very ill applied by an improver, who should endeavour to give each scene every variety that might please in a picture separately considered, instead of such varieties as are consistent with its own peculiar character and situation, and with the connections and dependencies it has on other objects. Smoothness, verdure, and undulation, are the most characteristic beauties of a lawn, but they are in their nature closely allied to monotony; improvers, instead of endeavouring to remedy that defect, towards which those essential qualities of beauty are constantly tending, have, on the contrary, added to it and made it much more striking, by the disposition of their trees, and their method of forming the banks of artificial rivers: nor have they confined this system of levelling and turving to those scenes where smoothness and verdure ought to be the ground-

work of improvement, but have made it the fundamental principle of their art.

With respect to those objects where a very different art is concerned, the impressions are also very different: a perfectly flat square meadow, surrounded by a neat hedge, and neither tree nor bush in it, is looked upon not only without disgust, but with pleasure, for it pretends only to neatness and utility, and the same may be said of a piece of arable of excellent husbandry: but when a dozen pieces are laid together and called a lawn, or a pleasure-ground, with manifest pretensions to beauty, the eye grows fastidious, and has not the same indulgence for taste, as for agriculture. Where indeed men of property, either from false taste, or from a sordid desire of gain, disfigure such scenes or buildings as painters admire, our indignation is very justly excited: not so when agriculture, in its general progress, as is often unfortunately the case, interferes with picturesqueness or beauty. The painter may indeed lament; but that science, which of all others most benefits

mankind, has a right to more than his forgiveness, when wild thickets are converted into scenes of plenty and industry, and when gypsies and vagrants give way to the less picturesque figures of husbandmen and their attendants.

I believe the idea that smoothness and verdure will make amends for the want of variety and picturesqueness, arises from our not distinguishing those qualities that are grateful to the mere organ of sight, from those various combinations, which through the progressive cultivation of that sense, have produced inexhaustible sources of delight and admiration. Mr. Mason observes, that green is to the eye, what harmony is to the ear; the comparison holds throughout; for a long continuance of either without some relief, is equally tiresome to both senses. Soft and smooth sounds, are those which are most grateful to the mere sense; the least artful combination, even that of a third below sung by another voice, at first distracts the attention from the tune; when that is got over, a Venetian duet appears

the perfection of melody and harmony. By degrees however the ear, like the eye, tires of a repetition of the same flowing strain; it requires some marks of invention, of original and striking character as well as of sweetness, in the melodies of a composer; it takes in more and more intricate combinations of harmony and opposition of parts, not only without confusion, but with delight; and with that delight (the only lasting one) which is produced both from the effect of the whole, and the detail of the parts *. At the same time, the having acquired a relish for such artful combinations, so far from excluding, except in narrow

* This I take to be the reason why those who are real connoisseurs in any art, can give the most unwearied attention to what the general lover is soon tired of. Both are struck, though not in the same manner or degree, with the *whole* of a scene; but the painter is also eagerly employed in examining the *parts*, and all the artifice of nature in composing such a whole. The general lover stops at the first gaze; and I have heard it said by those, who in other pursuits shewed the most discriminating taste, "Why should we look at these things any more---we have seen them."

Non ragionar di lor; ma guarda e passa.

pedantic minds, a taste for simple melodies, or simple scenes, heightens the enjoyment of them. It is only by such acquirements, that we learn to distinguish what is simple, from what is bald and commonplace; what is varied and intricate, from what is only perplexed.

CHAPTER III.

OF all the effects in landscape, the most brilliant and captivating are those produced by water; on the management of which, as I have been told, Mr. Brown particularly piqued himself. If those beauties in natural rivers and lakes which are imitable by art, and the selections of them in the works of great painters, be the proper objects of imitation, Mr. Brown grossly mistook his talent; for among all his tame productions, his pieces of made water are perhaps the most so.

One striking property of water, and that which most distinguishes it from the grosser element of earth, is its being

a mirror; and a mirror which gives a peculiar freshness and tenderness to the colours it reflects: it softens the stronger lights, though the lucid veil it throws over them seems hardly to diminish their brilliancy; and gives breadth, and often depth, to the shadows, while from its glassy surface they gain a peculiar look of transparency. These beautiful and varied effects, however, are chiefly produced by the *near* objects; by trees and bushes immediately on the banks; by those which hang over the water, and form dark coves beneath their branches; by various tints of the soil where the ground is broken; by roots, and old trunks of trees; by tussucks of rushes, and by large stones that are partly whitened by the air, and partly covered with mosses, lichens, and weather-stains; while the soft tufts of grass, and the smooth verdure of meadows with which they are intermixed, appear a thousand times more soft, smooth, and verdant by such contrasts.

But to produce reflections there must be objects; for according to a maxim I

have heard quoted from the old law of France (a maxim that hardly required the sanction of such venerable authority) *ou il n'y a rien, le roi perd ses droits*; and this is generally a case in point with respect to Mr. Brown's artificial rivers. Even when, according to Mr. Walpole's description, "a few trees, scattered here and there on its edges, sprinkle the tame bank that accompanies its mæanders," the reflections would not have any great variety, or brilliancy*.

The mæanders of a river, which at every turn present scenes of a different character, make us strongly feel the use and the

* The passage I have quoted is in his Treatise on Modern Gardening. The general tenor of that part is in commendation of the present style of made water; but this passage contains more just and pointed satire, than ever was conveyed in the same number of words: *a few trees, scattered here and there on its edges, sprinkle the tame bank*. It seems to me that in the midst of praises, his natural taste breaks out into criticism, perhaps unintended, and which, on that account, may well sting the improver who reads them; for the sting is always much sharper when

Medio de fonte leporum

Surgit amari aliquid, quod in ipsis floribus angat.

charm of them ; but when the same sweeps return as regularly as the steps of a minuet, the eye is quite wearied with following them over and over again. What makes the sweeps much more formal, is their extreme nakedness. The sprinkling of a few scattered trees on their edges will not do ; there must be masses, and groups, and various degrees of openings, and concealment ; and by such means, some little variety may be given even to these tame banks, for tame they always will remain : and it may here be observed, that the same objects which produce reflections, produce also variety of outline, of tints, of lights and shadows, as well as intricacy. So intimate is the connection between all these different beauties ; so often does the absence of one of them, imply the absence of the others.

In the turns of a beautiful river, the lines are so varied with projections, coves, and inlets ; with smooth and broken ground ; with some parts open, and with others fringed and overhung with trees and bushes ;

with peeping rocks, large mossy stones, and all their soft and brilliant reflections, that the eye lingers upon them: the two banks seem as it were to protract their meeting, and to form their junction insensibly, they so blend and unite with each other. In Mr. Brown's naked canals, nothing detains the eye a moment; and the two bare sharp extremities appear to cut into each other. If in such productions a near approach to mathematical exactness were a merit instead of a defect, the sweeps of Mr. Brown's water would be admirable; for many of them seem not to have been formed by degrees with the spade, but scooped out at once by an immense iron crescent, which after cutting out the indented part on one side, was applied to the opposite side, and then reversed to make the sweeps; so that in each sweep the indented and the projecting parts, if they could be shoved together, would fit like the pieces of a dissected map*.

* When I speak of Mr. Brown's artificial water, I include without much scruple, the greater part of what has

Where these serpentine canals are made; if there happen to be any sudden breaks or inequalities in the ground; any thickets or bushes; any thing, in short, that might cover the rawness and formality of new work—instead of taking advantage of such accidents, all must be made level and bare; and, by a strange perversion of terms, stripping nature stark-naked, is called dressing her.

A piece of stagnant water, with that thin, uniform, grassy edge which always remains after the operation of levelling, is much more like a temporary overflowing in a meadow or pasture, than what it professes to imitate—a lake or a river: for the principal distinction between the outline of such an

been made since his time: I consider him as the Hercules to whom the labours of the lesser heroes are to be attributed, and they have had no difficulty in copying his model exactly. Natural rivers, indeed, can only be imitated by the eye either in painting or reality; but his may be surveyed, and an exact plan taken of them by admeasurement; and though such a representation would not accord with a Claude or a Gaspar, it might with great propriety be hung up with a map of the demesne.

overflowing, and that of a permanent piece of water neither formed nor improved by art, is, that the flood-water is in general every where even with the grass, that there are no banks to it, nothing that appears firmly to contain it. In order, therefore, to impress on the whole of any artificial water a character of age, permanency, capacity, and above all, of naturalness as well as variety, some degree of height and of abruptness in the banks is required, and different degrees of both; some appearance of their having been in parts gradually worn and undermined by the successive action of rain and frost, and even by that of the water when put in motion by winds: for the banks of a mill-pond, which is proverbial for stillness, are generally undermined in parts by a succession of such accidental circumstances. All this diversity of rough broken ground, varying in height and form, and accompanied with projecting trees and bushes, will readily be acknowledged to have more painter-like effects, than one bare, uniform slope of grass; that

acknowledgment is quite sufficient, and the objections, which are easily foreseen, are easily answered; for there are various ways in which rudeness may be corrected and disguised, as well as blended with what is smooth and polished, without destroying the marked character of nature on the one hand, or a dressed appearance on the other; of this I have already given some few instances*. But as artificial lakes and rivers are usually made, the water appears in every part so nearly on the same level with the land, and so totally without banks, that were it not for the regularity of the curves, a stranger might often suppose that when dry weather came the flood would go off, and the meadow be restored to its natural state. Sometimes, however, it happens, that the bottoms of meadows and pastures subject to floods, are in parts bounded by natural banks against which the water lies, where it takes a very natural and varied form, and might easily from many points, and those not distant, be

* Vide my Letter to Mr. Repton, page 142.

mistaken for part of a river : to such over-
 flowings I of course do not mean to al-
 lude, the comparison would do a great
 deal too much honour to those pieces of
 water, the banks of which had been formed
 by Mr. Brown ; for it is impossible to see
 any part of them without knowing them
 to be artificial.

Among the various ways in which the
 present style of artificial water has been
 defended, certain passages from the poets
 have been quoted*, to shew that it is a
 great beauty in a river to have the water
 close to the edge of the grass :

May thy *brimmed* waves for this
 Their full tribute never miss.

Vivo de pumice fontes
 Roscida mobilibus lambcbant gramina rivis*.

To which might be added the well known
 passage :

Without o'erflowing full.

* Essay on Design in Gardening, page 203.

† Claudian de raptu Proserpinæ.

I have such respect for the feeling which most poets have shewn for natural beauties, and think they have so often and so happily expressed what is, and ought to be, the general feeling of mankind, that wherever they were clearly and uniformly against me, I should certainly, as far as that general sensation was concerned, allow myself to be in the wrong. In this case, however, I can safely agree with the poets, and yet condemn Mr. Brown. With regard to the first instance, I might say, that without thinking of beauty, it is a very natural compliment to a river-god or goddess, to wish their streams always full; but I am ready to admit, that by *brimmed* waves the poet meant as full as the river could be without overflowing, and that it were to be wished for the sake of beauty, that rivers could always be kept in that state. All this is clearly in favour of an equal height of the *water*; but can it be inferred from this, or, I will venture to say, from any passage whatever, that Milton, or any other poet, was of opinion that the

banks ought every where to be of an equal height above the water, and the ground equally sloped down to it? If it be allowed, as I presume it must, that no such idea is to be found amongst the poets, I am sure it can as little be justified by natural scenery: for let us imagine the river to be brimful, like a canal, for a certain distance from any given point, and then, as it perpetually happens, the bank to rise suddenly to a considerable height; the *water* must remain on the same level, but the *brim* would be changed, and instead of being brimful, according to an idea taken from Mr. Brown, not from Milton, the river though full, would in that place be deep within its banks. But still, it has been argued, when the water rises to the upper edge of the banks, the signs of their having been worn cannot appear: certainly not in Mr. Brown's canals, where monotony is so carefully guarded, that the full stream of a real river would, for a long time, hardly produce any variety: but do rivers, in their natural state never swell with rain or snow,

and, before they discharge themselves over the *lowest* parts, wear and undermine their *higher* banks? a distinction, which does not exist in what are called imitations of rivers. Do not the marks of such floods on the higher banks remain after the river has retired into its proper channel, that is, nearly to the height of the *lower* banks? but even on a supposition of its never overflowing, and never sinking, the same thing would happen in some degree; for it does happen in stagnant water, and must wherever there are any steep banks exposed to the usual effects of rain and frost.

The image in Claudian is extremely poetical, and no less pleasing in reality; the passage relates, however, to a small rivulet, not to a river: but supposing it did relate to a river, are we thence to infer that according to the poet's meaning, nothing but grass ought *any where* to be in contact with the water, and that the turf must *every where* be regularly sloped down to it? that there must be no *other* image?

When trees from a steep and broken bank form an arch over the water, and dip their foliage in the stream ; when the clear mirror beneath reflects their branching roots, the coves under them, the jutting rocks upon which they have fastened, and seem to hold in their embrace, and the bright and mellow tints of large moss-crowned stones that have their foundation below the water, and rising out of it support and form a part of the bank—would the poet sigh for grass only, and wish to destroy, level, and cover with turf these and a thousand other beautiful and picturesque circumstances? Would he object to the river, because it was not every where brimful to the top of *all* its banks, and did not *every where* kiss the grass? And are we to conclude, that when poets mention one beauty, they mean to exclude all the rest?

It may possibly be said, that there are *natural* rivers, the banks of which like those of Mr. Brown's, keep for a long time together the same level above the water :

there certainly are such rivers, but I never heard of their being admired, or frequented for their beauty. It is possible also, that there may be found some lake or meer, with a uniform grassy edge all round it: I can only say, that such an instance of complete natural monotony, though it may be admired for its rarity, cannot be a proper object of imitation. But if an improver happens to be placed in a level country, should he not even there consult the *genius loci*? without doubt, and therefore he will not attempt hanging rocks and precipices; but he may surely be allowed to steal from the better genius of some other scene, a few circumstances of beauty and variety that will not be incompatible with his own. By such methods, many pleasing effects may be given to an artificial river even in a dead flat; but where there is any natural variety in the ground, with a tendency to wood and other vegetation, nothing but art systematically absurd, and diligently employed in counter-

acting the efforts of nature, can create and preserve perfect monotony in the banks of water.

An imitation of the most striking varieties of nature, so skilfully arranged as to pass for nature herself, would certainly be acknowledged as the highest attainment of art; for however fond of art, and even of the appearance of it some improvers seem to be, if a stranger were to mistake one of their pieces of made water for the Thames, such an error I imagine would not only be forgiven, but, notwithstanding Mr. Brown's modest apostrophe to that river,* considered as the highest compliment. Yet, strange as it must appear, no one seems to have thought of copying those circumstances which might occasion so flattering a deception: if it were proposed to any of these professors to make an artificial river without re-

* "Thames! Thames! Thou wilt never forgive me."
—A well known exclamation of Mr. Brown, when he was looking with rapture and exultation at one of his own canals.

gular curves*, slopes, and levelled banks, but with those characteristic beauties and negligencies, which so plainly distinguish natural rivers from all that has hitherto been done in the pretended imitations of them by art, they would, in Briggs's language, "stare like stuck pigs—do no such thing." Their talent lies another way; and if you have a *real* river, and will let them improve it, you will be surprised to find how soon they will make it like an *artificial* one; so much so, that the most critical eye could scarcely discover that its banks had not been planned by Mr. Brown, and formed by the spade and the wheel-barrow.

* The lines in natural rivers, in bye roads, in the skirtings of glades of forests, have sometimes the appearance of regular curves, and seem to justify the use of them in artificial scenery; but something always saves them from such a crude degree of it. If, on a subject so very unmathematical, I might venture to use any allusion to that science, or any term drawn from it, such lines might be called picturesque asymptotes; however they may approach to regular curves, they never fall into them.

I am persuaded that a very great improvement might be made in the banks of artificial water merely by a different mode of practice, without expecting from every professor the eye, or the invention of a Poussin. Mr. Brown and his followers have indeed shewn very little invention, if it even deserve that name, and of that little they have been great œconomists; with them, walks, roads, brooks, rivers are, as it were, convertible terms: dry one of their rivers, it is a large walk or road; flood a walk or a road, it is a brook or a river, and the accompaniments, like the drone of a bagpipe, always remain the same. They do not indeed, always dam up a brook; it sometimes, though rarely, is allowed its liberty; but like animals that are suffered by the owner to run loose, it is marked as private property, by being mutilated*. If instead of having their banks regularly

* No operation in what is called improvement has such an appearance of barbarity, as that of destroying the modest retired character of a brook. I remember some burlesque lines on the treatment of Regulus by the Car-

sloped and shaven, or being turned into regular pieces of water, brooks were sometimes stopped partially and to different degrees of height, and every advantage were taken of the natural beauties of their banks, a number of pleasing and varied effects might be obtained. There are often parts, where by a small degree of digging so as to lower the bottom, or of obstruction by mere earth and stones, the water would lie, as in a natural bed, under banks enriched with vegetation; by such means there would be a succession of still, and of running water; of clear reflection, and of lively motion.

These beauties are so great, and so easily obtained, that before a running stream is forced into a piece of stagnant water, the

thaginians, which perfectly describe the effect of that operation;

His eyelids they pared;
Good God how he stared!

Just so do those improvers torture a brook, by widening it, cutting away its natural fringe, and exposing it to "day's garish eye."

advantages of such an alteration ought to be very apparent: if it be determined, nothing that may compensate for such a loss should be neglected; and as the water itself can have but one uniform surface, every variety of which banks are capable, should be studied both from nature and painting, and those selected, which will best accord with the general scenery. Objects of reflection are peculiarly required, for besides their distinct beauty, they soften the cold white glare, of what is usually called a fine sheet of water; an expression which contains a very just criticism on what it seems to commend: for certainly water is far from being in its most beautiful state, when it is most like the object to which it is thus compared. Collins indeed in his Ode to Evening, has used this kind of expression with great propriety:

Where some *sheety* lake
Cheers the lone heath;

For water on a heath, where there are scarcely any objects of reflection, has a *sheety* appear-

ance ; yet in such a situation, and towards the close of day, a cheering one. There is however one kind of scenery by which the expression may be still more naturally suggested ; and I can easily conceive that on seeing a piece of made water in its usual naked state, any person might be struck with the uniform whiteness of the water itself, and the uniform greenness, and exact level of its banks, or rather its border ; the idea of linen spread upon grass might thence very naturally occur to him, which in civil language he would express by a fine sheet of water. This has always been meant and taken as a flattering expression, though nothing can more pointedly describe the defects of such a scene ; for had there been any variety in the banks, with deep shades, brilliant lights, and reflections, the idea of a sheet would hardly have suggested itself, or if it had, he who made such a comparison would have made a very bad one,

“ And liken’d things that are not like at all.”

But in the other case, nothing can be more alike than a sheet of water, and a real sheet; and wherever there is a large bleaching ground, the most exact imitations of Mr. Brown's lakes and rivers might be made in linen: and they would be just as proper objects of jealousy to the Thames, as any of his performances*.

I am aware that Mr. Brown's admirers with one voice will quote the great piece of water at Blenheim, as a complete answer to all I have said against him on this subject. No one can admire more highly than I do that most princely of all places; but it would be doing great injustice to nature and Vanbrugh, not to distinguish their

* I happened to be at a gentleman's house, the architect of which (to use Colin Campbell's expression) "had not preserved the majesty of the front from the ill effect of crowded apertures." A neighbour of his, meaning to pay him a compliment on the number and closeness of his windows, exclaimed, "What a charming house you have! upon my word it is quite like a lanthorn." I must own I think the two compliments equally flattering; but a charming lanthorn has not yet had the success of a fine sheet.

merits in forming it, from those of Mr. Brown.

If there be an improvement more obvious than all others, it is that of damming up a stream which flows on a gentle level through a valley ; and it required no effort of genius to place the head, as Mr. Brown has done, in the narrowest, and most concealed part. He has, indeed, the negative merit (and it is one to which he is not always entitled) of having left the opposite bank of wood in its natural state ; and had he profited by so excellent a model, had he formed and planted the other more distant banks, so as to have continued something of the same style and character round the lake, though with those diversities which would naturally have occurred to a man of the least invention, he would, in my opinion, have had some claim to a title created since his time ; a title of no small pretension, that of *landscape gardener*. But if the banks above and near the bridge, were formed, or even approved of by him, his taste had

more of the engineer than the painter ; for they have so strong a resemblance to the glacis of a fortification, that we might suppose the shape had been given them, in compliment to the first duke of Marlborough's campaigns in Flanders.

The bank near the house which is opposite to the wooded one, and which forms part of the pleasure-ground, is extremely well done ; for that required a high degree of polish, and there the gardener was at home. Without meaning to detract from his real merit in that part, but at the same time to reduce it to what appears to me its just value, I must observe that two things have contributed to give it a rich effect at a distance, as well as a varied and dressed look within itself. In the first place, there were several old trees there before he began his works ; and their high and spreading tops, would unavoidably prevent that dead flatness of outline, *cet air ecrasè*, which his own close, lumpy plantations of trees always exhibit. In

the next place, the situation of this spot called for a large proportion of exotics of various heights: those of lower growth, though chiefly put in clumps, of which the edgy borders have a degree of formality, yet being subordinate, and not interfering with the higher growths, or with the original trees, have from the opposite bank the appearance of a rich underwood; and the beauty, and comparative variety of that garden scene from all points, are strongly in favour of the method of planting I described in a former part. It is clear to me, however, that Mr. Brown did not make use of this method from principle; for in that case, he would sometimes at least have tried it in less polished scenes, by substituting thorns, hollies, &c. in the place of shrubs. Of the rich, airy, and even dressed effect of such mixtures, he must have seen numberless examples in forests, in parks, on the banks of rivers; and from them he might have drawn the most useful instruction, were it

to be expected that those who profess to improve nature, should ever deign to become her scholars.

It may be said, however, that though he did not take this method of giving concealment, richness, and variety to the lower part of his plantations, and of guarding against monotony in the outline above, yet that he meant such monotony to be prevented by constant and judicious thinning; that a professor's business is to *form*, not to *thin* plantations, and that Mr. Brown ought not to be made answerable for the neglect of gardeners. But a physician would deserve very ill of his patient, who, after prescribing for the moment, should abandon him to the care of his nurse; and who in his future visits should concern himself no farther, but let the disorder take its course, till the patient was irrecoverably emaciated, and exhausted. Mr. Brown, during a long practice, frequently repeated his visits; but, as far as I have observed, the

trees in his plantations bear no mark of his attention: indeed, his clumps strongly prove his love of compactness. There is another circumstance in his plantations, which deserves to be remarked: a favourite mixture of his was that of beech and Scotch firs, in nearly equal proportion: but where unity and simplicity of character are given up, it should be for the sake of a variety that will harmonize: which *two* trees, so equal in size and quantity, and so strongly contrasted in form and colour, can never do *.

I have given what I thought the just

* This puts me in mind of an anecdote I heard of a person, very much used to look at objects with a painter's eye:—He had three cows; when his wife, with a very proper œconomy, observed, that two were quite sufficient for their family, and desired him to part with one of them. “Lord, my dear,” said he, “*two* cows you know can never group.”

A third tree (like a third cow) might have connected and blended the discordant forms and colours of the beech and Scotch fir; but every thing I have seen of Mr. Brown's works, have convinced me that he had, in a figurative

degree of praise to Mr. Brown, for the method in which he has planted the garden scene which accompanies one part of the lake; but to judge properly of his taste and invention in the management of water, we must observe those banks with their accompaniments, which he has formed *entirely* himself, and that we may do without quitting Blenheim: below the cascade all is his own, and a more complete piece of monotony could hardly be furnished even from his own works. When he was no longer among shrubs and gravel walks, the gardener was quite at a loss; for his mind had never been prepared by a study of the great masters of landscape, for a more enlarged one of nature: finding, therefore, no invention, no resources within himself, he copied what he had most seen, and most admired—his own

sense, no *eye*; and if he had had none in the literal sense, it would have only been a private misfortune,

And partial evil, universal good.

little works; and in the same spirit in which he had magnified a parterre, he planned a gigantic gravel walk: when it was dug out, he filled it with another element, called it a river, and thought the noblest in this kingdom must be jealous of such a rival.

CONCLUDING CHAPTER.

I HAVE now gone through the principal points of modern gardening; but the observations I have made relate almost entirely to the *grounds*, and not to what may properly be called the *garden*.

As the art of gardening in this extended sense*, vies with that of painting, and has been thought likely to form a new school of painters, I think I am justified in having compared its operations and effects with those of the art it pretends to rival, nay, to instruct. These two rivals whom I am so desirous of reconciling, have hitherto been guided by very opposite principles, and the character of their productions

* A gentleman, whose taste and feeling, both for art and nature, rank as high as any man's, was lamenting to me the *extent* of Mr. Brown's operations:---“Former improvers,” said he, “at least kept near the house; but this fellow crawls like a snail all over the grounds, and leaves his cursed slime behind him wherever he goes.”

has been as opposite; but the cold flat monotony of the new favourite, has been preferred by many, “aye, and those great ones too,” to the spirited variety of her eldest sister: she has, indeed, been so puffed up by this high favour, that she has hardly deigned to acknowledge the relationship, and has even treated her with contempt. Those also, who from their situation and influence, were best qualified to have brought about a union between them, have, on the contrary, contributed to widen the breach: for I have heard an eminent professor treat the idea of judging, in any degree, of places as of pictures, or of comparing them at all together, as quite absurd. In real life, the noblest part a man can act, the part which most conciliates the esteem and good-will of all mankind, is that of promoting union and harmony wherever occasion offers: in the present case, though a breach between these figurative persons is not of serious consequence to society, yet I shall feel no small pleasure and pride, should my endeavours be successful. I have shewn to the

best of my power, how much it is their mutual interest to act cordially together, and have offered every motive for such an union; and I hope that prejudices, however strongly rooted, however enforced by those who may be interested in the separation, will at last give way. I may, perhaps, be thought somewhat caustick for a peace-maker, and, I must own,

“ My zeal flows warm and eager from my bosom.”

But if war be made for the sake of peace, those who doubt the wisdom of the expedient will agree, that it ought to be prosecuted with vigour.

I never was in company with Mr. Brown, nor even knew him by sight, and therefore can have no personal dislike to him; but I have heard numberless instances of his arrogance and despotism, and such high pretensions seem to me little justified by his works. Arrogance and imperious manners, which even joined to the truest merit and the most splendid talents, create disgust and opposition,

when they are the offspring of a little narrow mind elated with temporary favour, provoke ridicule, and deserve to meet with it.

Mr. Mason's poem on modern gardening, is as real an attack on Mr. Brown's system, as what I have written. He has as strongly guarded the reader against the insipid formality of clumps, &c. and has equally recommended the study of painting as the best guide to improvers; but the praise which he has bestowed on Mr. Brown himself, however generally conveyed, has spoiled the effect of so powerful an antidote. Most people, from a very natural indolence, are more inclined to copy an established and approved practice, than to correct its defects, or to form a new mode of practice from theory; Mr. Mason's eulogium has therefore sanctioned Mr. Brown's system more effectually, than his precepts have guarded against it. That eulogium, however, (if I may be allowed to make a suggestion, which I think is authorized by the tenor of the poem) has

been given from the most amiable motive—the fear of hurting those with whom he lived on the most friendly terms, and who had very much employed and admired Mr. Brown. Silence would, in such a work, have been a tacit condemnation; still worse to have “damned with *faint* praise:” my idea may possibly be taken upon wrong grounds, but I have often admired Mr. Mason’s address in so delicate a situation. Had Mr. Brown transfused into his works any thing of the taste and spirit which prevail in Mr. Mason’s precepts and descriptions, he would have deserved, and might possibly have enjoyed the high honour of having those works celebrated by him and Mr. Walpole; and not have had them referred, as they have been by both, to future poets and historians.

It may, perhaps, be thought presumptuous in an individual, who has never distinguished himself by any work that might give authority to his opinion, so boldly to condemn, what has been admired and practised by men of the most liberal taste

and education : but the force of fashion and example are well known, and few have such energy of mind, and confidence in their own principles, to think and act for themselves, in opposition to general opinion and practice. Some French writer, whose name I do not recollect, ventures to express a doubt, whether a tree waving in the wind with all its branches free and untouched, may not possibly be an object more worthy of admiration, than one cut into form in the gardens of Versailles. This bold sceptic in theory, had most probably his trees shorn like those of his sovereign.

It is equally probable that many an English gentleman may have felt deep regret, when Mr. Brown had metamorphosed some charming trout stream into a piece of water; and that many a time afterwards, when disgusted with its glare and formality he has been heavily plodding along its naked banks, he may have thought how beautifully fringed those of his little brook once had been; how it sometimes ran rapidly over the stones and shallows; and

sometimes in a narrower channel, stole silently beneath the over-hanging boughs. Many rich natural groups of trees he might remember—now thinned and rounded into clumps; many sequestered thickets which he had loved when a boy---now all open and exposed, without shade or variety; and all these sacrifices made, not to his own taste, but to the fashion of the day, and against his natural feelings.

It seems to me that there is something of patriotism in the praises which Mr. Walpole and Mr. Mason have bestowed on English gardening; and that zeal for the honour of their country, has made them, in the general view of the subject, overlook defects, which they have themselves condemned. My love for my country, is, I trust, not less ardent than theirs, but it has taken a different turn; and I feel anxious to free it from the disgrace of propagating a system, which, should it become universal, would disfigure the face of all Europe. It is my wish that a more liberal and extended idea of improvement should

prevail; that, instead of the narrow mechanical practice of a few English gardeners, the noble and varied works of the eminent painters of every age and of every country, and those of their supreme mistress Nature, should be the great models of imitation.

If a taste for drawing and painting and a knowledge of their principles, made a part of every gentleman's education; if instead of hiring a professed improver to torture his grounds after an established model, each improved his own place according to general conceptions drawn from nature and pictures, or from hints which favourite masters in painting, or favourite parts of nature suggested to him, there might in time be a great variety in the styles of improvement, and all of them with peculiar excellencies. No two painters ever saw nature with the same eyes; they tended to one point by a thousand different routes, and that makes the charm of an acquaintance with their various modes of conception and execution: but

any one of Mr. Brown's followers might say, with great truth, "we have but one idea among us."

I have always understood, that Mr. Hamilton who created Painshill, not only had studied pictures, but had studied them for the express purpose of improving real landscape. The place he created (a task of quite another difficulty from correcting, or from adding to natural scenery) fully proves the use of such a study. Among many circumstances of more striking effect, I was highly pleased with a walk, which leads through a bottom skirted with wood; and I was pleased with it, not merely from what *had*, but from what had *not* been done; it had no edges, no borders, no distinct lines of separation; nothing was done, except keeping the ground properly neat, and the communication free from any obstruction. The eye and the footsteps were equally unconfined; and if it be a high commendation to a writer or a painter, that he knows when to leave off, it is not less so to an improver.

This, and other parts of Painshill seem to have been formed on the precept contained in the well-known lines of Tasso, in his description of the garden of Armida :

*E quel che'l bello e'l caro accresce a l'opre,
L' arte che tutto fa, nulla si scopre.*

Mr. Hamilton, however, is one of the very few who have profited by it : for although no precept be more generally admitted in theory than that of concealing the art which is employed, none has been less observed in practice. It is true, however, that it must not be too strictly followed in all cases ; and that like other excellent rules, it has its exceptions. Every thing that belongs to buildings and architecture is manifestly artificial, and the concealment of art entirely out of the question : whatever therefore is connected with the mansion, should display a degree of art and of ornament, in proportion to its style and character ; and I own my regret, that all the old decorations have been banished from an affectation of simplicity, and what

is called nature. It is obvious on the same principle, that all roads, walks, and communications immediately connected with the house, should be completely regular and uniform ; and where a more extended part, as at Blenheim, is richly dressed with shrubs and exotics, and kept in the highest state of polished neatness, a regular walk of the same high polish is perfectly in character : but in other parts, not solely the more distant, but wherever there is any thing of natural wildness and intricacy in the scene, the improver should conceal himself like a judicious author, who sets his reader's imagination at work, while he seems not to be guiding, but exploring with him some new region. Among the numberless excellencies of Homer it is not the least, that he scarcely ever appears in his own person : you are engaged amidst the most interesting and striking scenes, and are carried on from one to another in such a manner, as to be totally unconscious of the consummate skill with which your route has been prepared : and his

poem is the completest exemplification of Tasso's precept in a more exalted art. The improver (if I may be allowed to compare small things with great) should pursue the same line of conduct in his humbler art, though by a different process; and while he employs his whole skill to lead the spectator in the best direction, through the most interesting scenes, and towards the most striking points of view, and to facilitate his approach to them, he should not strive to confine him to one single route, and should often, where it is practicable, conceal his having made any route at all. There is in our nature a repugnance to despotism even in trifles, and we are never so heartily pleased as when we appear to have made every discovery ourselves: it is this sort of feeling, as opposed to the one which arises from what is plainly and avowedly artificial, that Tasso seems to indicate by

il bello e'l caro accresce a Popre.

It is a feeling that I have more than once

experienced myself and observed in others, when after having been long confined to regular walks, however judiciously taken, we have enjoyed the dear delight of getting to some spot where there were no traces of art, and no other walk or communication than a sheep-track, or some foot-path winding among the thickets.

It is in such spots as those, that art, if it interfere at all, should most carefully conceal itself; and in such, a Mr. Hamilton would proceed with a very cautious hand: but whatever effect an acquaintance with the fine arts, or perhaps the precept of Tasso, or the example of Homer may have had on such a mind as his, nothing of that kind has influenced those of professed improvers; and a style very different from that of Painshill has been exhibited at no very great distance from it, in a place begun I believe by Kent, and finished by Brown. A wood with many old trees covered with ivy, mixed with thickets of hollies, yews, and thorns; a wood, which Rousseau might have dedicated *a la reverie*, is so in-

tersected by walks and green alleys all edged and bordered, that there is no escaping from them ; they act like flappers in Laputa, and instantly wake you from any dream of retirement. The borders of these walks are so thickly planted, and the rest of the wood so impracticable, that it seems as if the improver said, “ You shall never wander from my walks ; never exercise your own taste and judgment, never form your own compositions ; neither your eyes nor your feet shall be allowed to stray from the boundaries I have traced :” a species of thralldom unfit for a free country.

There is, indeed, something despotic in the general system of improvement ; all must be laid open ; all that obstructs, levelled to the ground ; houses, orchards, gardens, all swept away. *Painting*, on the contrary, tends to humanize the mind : where a despot thinks every person an intruder who enters his domain, and wishes to destroy cottages and pathways, and to reign alone, the lover of painting, considers the dwellings, the inhabitants, and the

marks of their intercourse, as ornaments to the landscape *.

For the honour of humanity there *are* minds, which require no other motive than what passes within. And here I cannot resist paying a tribute to the memory of a beloved uncle, and recording a benevolence towards all the inhabitants around him, that struck me from my earliest remembrance; and it is an impression I wish always to cherish. It seemed as if he had made his extensive walks as much for them as for himself; they used them as freely, and their enjoyment was his. The

* Sir Joshua Reynolds told me, that when he and Wilson the landscape painter were looking at the view from Richmond terrace, Wilson was pointing out some particular part; and in order to direct his eye to it, "There," said he, "near those houses---there! where the *figures* are."---Though a painter, said Sir Joshua, I was puzzled: I thought he meant statues, and was looking upon the *tops* of the houses; for I did not at first conceive that the men and women we plainly saw walking about, were by him only thought of as figures in the landscape.

village bore as strong marks of his and of his brother's attentions (for in that respect they appeared to have but one mind) to the comforts and pleasures of its inhabitants. Such attentive kindnesses are amply repaid by affectionate regard and reverence; and were they general throughout the kingdom, they would do much more towards guarding us against democratical opinions,

“ Than twenty thousand soldiers arm'd in proof.”

The cheerfulness of the scene I have mentioned, and all the interesting circumstances attending it, so different from those of solitary grandeur, have convinced me, that he who destroys dwellings, gardens, and inclosures, for the sake of mere extent and parade of property, only extends the bounds of monotony, and of dreary selfish pride; but contracts those of variety, amusement, and humanity.

I own it does surprise me, that in an age and in a country where the arts are so

highly cultivated; one single plan, and such a plan, should have been so generally adopted; and that even the love of peculiarity should not sometimes have checked this method of levelling all distinctions, of making all places alike *; all equally tame and insipid.

Few persons have been so lucky as never to have seen or heard the true *proser*; smiling, and distinctly uttering his flowing common-place nothings, with the same placid countenance, the same even-toned voice: he is the very emblem of serpentine walks, belts, and rivers, and all Mr. Brown's works; like him they are smooth, flowing, even, and distinct; and like him they wear one's soul out.

There is a very different being of a much rarer kind, who hardly appears to be of the same species; full of unexpected

* A person, well known for his taste and abilities, being at a gentleman's house where Mr. Brown was expected, drew a plan by anticipation; which proved so exact, that I believe the ridicule it threw on the serious plan, helped to prevent its execution.

turns, of flashes of light: objects the most familiar, are placed by him in such singular, yet natural points of view; he strikes out such unthought-of agreements and contrasts; such combinations, so little obvious, yet never forced nor affected, that the attention cannot flag; but from the delight of what is passed, we eagerly listen for what is to come. This is the true picturesque, and the propriety of that term will be more felt, if we attend to what corresponds to the *beautiful* in conversation. How different is the effect of that soft insinuating style, of those gentle transitions, which, without dazzling or surprising, keep up an increasing interest, and insensibly wind round the heart.

It is only by a habit of observation added to natural sensibility, that we learn to distinguish what is really beautiful, from what is merely smooth and flowing, and to give a decided preference to the former: by the same means also we gain a true relish for the picturesque in visible objects, and likewise for what in some measure

answers to it,—the quick, lively and sudden turns of fancy in conversation. I have sometimes seen a *proser* quite forlorn in the company of a man of brilliant imagination; he seemed “dazzled with “excess of light,” his dull faculties totally unable to keep pace with the other’s rapid ideas. I have afterwards observed the same man get close to a brother *proser*; and the two snails have travelled on so comfortably upon their own slime, that they seemed to feel no more impression either of pleasure or envy from what they had heard, than a real snail may be supposed to do, at the active bounds and leaps of a stag, or of a high-mettled courser.

This is exactly the case with that practical *proser*, the true improver: carry him to a scene merely picturesque, he is bewildered with its variety and intricacy, the charms of which he neither relishes nor comprehends; and longs to be crawling among his clumps, and debating about the tenth part of an inch in the turn of a gra-

vel walk. The mass of improvers seem indeed to forget that we are distinguished from other animals, by being

“ Nobler far, of look *erect* ”

they go about

“ With leaden eye that loves the ground,”

and are so continually occupied with turns and sweeps, and manœuvring stakes, that they never gain an idea of the first elements of composition.

Such a mechanical system of operations little deserves the name of an art. There are indeed certain words in all languages that have a good and a bad sense; such as *simplicity* and *simple*, *art* and *artful*, which as often express our contempt as our admiration. It seems to me, that whenever art, with regard to plan or disposition, is used in a good sense, it means to convey an idea of some degree of invention; of contrivance that is not obvious; of something that raises expectation, and which differs with success from what we

recollect having seen before. With regard to improving, that alone I should call art in a good sense, which was employed in collecting from the infinite varieties of *accident* (which is commonly called *nature*, in opposition to what is called *art*) such circumstances as may happily be introduced, according to the *real* capabilities of the place to be improved. This is what painters have done in their art; and thence it is, that many of these lucky accidents being strongly pointed out by them, are called picturesque.

He therefore, in my mind, will shew most art in improving, who *leaves* (a very material point) or who creates the greatest variety of landscapes; that is of such different compositions as painters will least wish to alter: not he who begins his work by general clearing and smoothing, or in other words, by destroying all those accidents of which such advantages might have been made; but which afterwards, the most enlightened and experienced artist can never hope to restore.

When I hear how much has been done

by art in a place of large extent, in no one part of which, where that art has been busy, a painter would take out his sketch-book ; when I see the sickening display of that art, such as it is, and the total want of effect—I am tempted to reverse the sense of the famous line of Tasso, and to say of such performances,

L'arte che nulla fa, tutta si scopre.

APPENDIX.

GREAT part of my essay was written, before I saw that of Mr. Gilpin on picturesque beauty. I had gained so much information on that subject from his other works that I read it with extreme eagerness, on account of the interest I took in the subject itself, as well as from my opinion of the author. At first I thought my work had been anticipated ; I was pleased, however, to find some of my ideas confirmed, and was in hopes of seeing many new lights struck out. But as I advanced, that distinction between the two characters, that line of separation which I thought would have been accurately marked out, became less and less visible ; till at length

the beautiful and the picturesque were more than ever mixed and incorporated together, the whole subject involved in doubt and obscurity, and a sort of anathema denounced against any one who should try to clear it up. Had I not advanced too far to think of retreating, I might possibly have been deterred by so absolute a veto, from such authority ; but I hope I shall not be thought presumptuous for having still continued my researches, though so diligent and acute an observer had given up the inquiry himself, and pronounced it hopeless.

Mr. Gilpin's authority is deservedly so high, that where I have the misfortune to differ from him his opinion will of course be preferred to mine, unless I can clearly shew that it is ill-founded. I must therefore endeavour to shew in what respects it is ill-founded as often as these points occur, and with the best of my abilities ; for any thing short of a victory, is in this case a defeat.

I will first mention, in general, the diffi-

culties into which so ingenious a writer has been led, from losing sight of that genuine and universal distinction between the beautiful and the picturesque which he himself had begun by establishing, and which separates their characters equally in nature and in art; and from confining himself to that unsatisfactory notion of a mere general reference to the art of painting only.

He has given it as his opinion, that “roughness forms the most essential point of difference between the beautiful and the picturesque, and seems to be that particular quality which makes objects chiefly please in painting.” He therefore has thought it necessary in some instances, to exclude smooth objects from painting, and to shew in others, that what is smooth in reality, is rough in appearance; so that when we fancy ourselves admiring the smoothness which we think we perceive, as in a calm lake, we are in fact admiring the roughness which we have not ob-

served. I will now proceed to give the particular instances of those points in which we differ.

Mr. Gilpin observes, that "a piece of Palladian architecture may be elegant in the last degree; the proportion of its parts, the propriety of its ornaments, the symmetry of the whole, may be highly pleasing; but, if we introduce it in a picture, it immediately *becomes* a formal object, and ceases to please." He adds, "should we wish to give it picturesque beauty, we must, from a smooth building, turn it into a rough ruin."

Mr. Gilpin's first point was to shew that a building to be picturesque, must neither be smooth nor regular; and so far we agree. But then, to shew how much picturesque beauty (to use his expression) is preferred by painters to all other beauty, nay, how unfit beauty alone is for a picture, he asserts, that a piece of regular and finished architecture becomes a formal object, and ceases to please when intro-

duced in a picture; and that no painter who had his choice, would hesitate a moment between that and a ruin.

Were this really the case, we must give up Claude as a landscape painter; for he not only has introduced a number of perfect, regular, and smooth pieces of architecture into his pictures, but into the most conspicuous parts of them. I should even doubt whether he may not have painted more entire buildings as *principal* objects, than he has ruins, though more of the latter where they are only *subordinate*.

Claude delighted in representing scenes of festive pomp and magnificence, as well as of pastoral life and retirement; but if we conceive those temples and palaces which he painted in their perfect state, and which he accompanied with every mark of a flourishing and populous country to be deserted and in ruins, the whole character of those splendid compositions, which have so much contributed to raise him above the level of a mere landscape painter, would be destroyed. Mr. Gilpin

cannot but remember that beautiful seaport which did belong to Mr. Lock, and which, could pictures choose their own possessors, would never have left him: he must have observed that the architecture on the left hand was regular, perfect, and as smooth as such finished buildings appear in nature.

But with regard to entire buildings in contradistinction to ruins, the back grounds and landscapes of all the great masters are full of them, and in many the ruins few in proportion; so much so, that in the numerous set of Gaspar's published by Vivares, there are scarcely any ruins, though numberless entire buildings.

No painter more diligently studied picturesque disposition and effect than Paul Veronese; yet architecture of the most regular and finished kind, forms a very essential part of his magnificent compositions. Many of these splendid edifices have the most truly beautiful appearance in pictures, especially when they are accompanied, as in Claude's, by trees of

elegant forms, and when every part of the scenery accords with their character. I believe indeed, that we might reverse Mr. Gilpin's position, and with more truth assert, that a piece of Palladian architecture, however elegant, however well proportioned its parts, however well disposed and selected its ornaments, how perfect soever the symmetry of the whole, yet, in the mere elevation, or placed at the top of a lawn naked and unaccompanied, is a formal object, and excites only a cold admiration of the architect's ability ; but that it *becomes*, when introduced in a picture, a highly interesting object, and universally pleases. I of course mean introduced as the best masters have introduced and accompanied such buildings, for there can be no doubt of the tendency of all regular architecture to formality.

The skill with which that formality has been avoided by the great painters, without destroying smoothness or symmetry, is, perhaps, one of the strongest arguments in

favour of studying their works for the purposes of improvement.

On the subject of water I have again the misfortune of differing from Mr. Gilpin. He says, “ * If the lake be spread out on the canvass [and in this case it cannot be different in nature] the marmoreum æquor, pure, limpid, smooth as the polished mirror, we acknowledge it to be picturesque.” No one, I believe, will be singular enough to deny that a lake in such a state is beautiful ; and such I am persuaded must always be its prevailing character, though many picturesque circumstances should be found in the scenery around it. On this occasion I must beg leave to quote a passage from Mr. Locke †, on a different subject indeed, but of general application. “ These passions (fear, anger, shame, envy, &c.) are scarce any of them simple and alone, and wholly unmixed with others, though

* Essay on Picturesque Beauty, page 22.

† On the Human Understanding, octavo edit. page 208.

usually, in discourse and contemplation, that carries the name which operates strongest, and appears most in the present state of the mind." Now if smoothness, as Mr. Gilpin acknowledges, be at least a considerable source of beauty ; and if roughness, according to his own statement, be that which forms the most essential point of difference between the beautiful and the picturesque, it surely is rather a contradiction to his own principles to call a lake in its smoothest state picturesque, on account of such interruptions to the absolute smoothness, or rather uniformity of its surface, as not only accord with beauty, but are often in themselves sources of beauty ; such as shades of various kinds, undulations, and reflections.

Upon the same grounds that he asserts the smooth lake to be picturesque, he also gives that character to the high-fed horse with his smooth and shining coat. If, however* "a play of muscles appearing through the fineness of the skin, gently swelling and

* Essay on Picturesque Beauty, page 22.

sinking into each other—his being all over *lubricus aspici*, with reflections of light continually shifting upon him, and playing into each other,” make an animal picturesque, what then will make him beautiful? The interruption of his smoothness, by a variety of shades and colours, not sudden and strong, but “playing into each other, so that the eye glides up and down among their endless transitions,” certainly will not supply the room of roughness in such a degree as to over-balance the qualities of beauty, and abolish, as in the present instance, the very name.

It is true, that according to Mr. Gilpin’s two definitions*, both the lake and the horse in their smoothest possible state, are picturesque; but they are no less opposite to that character, according to his more strict and pointed method of defining it, by making roughness the most essential point of difference between it and the beautiful. After so plain and natural a distinction between the two characters, it surely would

* Vide pages 38 and 39.

have been more simple and satisfactory to have named things according to their obvious and prevailing qualities; and to have allowed that painters sometimes preferred beautiful, sometimes picturesque, sometimes grand and sublime objects, and sometimes objects where the two or the three characters, were equally, or in different degrees mixed with each other.

Many of the examples that I have given of picturesque animals, are taken from Mr. Gilpin's very ingenious work on forest scenery. He there observes, that among all the tribes of animals scarce any one is more ornamental in landscape than the ass. He adds "in what this picturesque beauty consists, whether in his peculiar character, in his strong lines, in his colouring, in the roughness of his coat, or in the mixture of them, would perhaps be difficult to ascertain." When I read this passage I had not seen the *Essay on Picturesque Beauty*, and it gave me great satisfaction to find my ideas of the causes of the picturesque confirmed by so attentive an observer as Mr.

Gilpin, though he spoke doubtingly ; and I could not help flattering myself, that as his authority had confirmed me in my ideas, so by tracing them through a greater variety of objects than his subject led him to consider, I might shew the justness and accuracy of his suppositions. Peculiarity of character, on which Mr. Gilpin very properly lays a stress, naturally arises from strong lines and sudden variations ; what is perfectly smooth and flowing, has proportionably less of peculiar character, and loses in picturesqueness, what it may gain in beauty.

This leads me to consider a part of Mr. Gilpin's Essay on Picturesque Beauty, that appears to me to be written in a very different spirit from the last mentioned passage ; as also from several others in his works, which mark the true character and cause of the picturesque in a masterly manner, and shew how much and how well he had observed. If the criticism I am going to make be just, Mr. Gilpin has, I think, laid himself open to it by his exclusive

fondness for the picturesque, and by having carried to excess his position, that roughness is that particular quality which makes objects chiefly please in painting. From his partiality to this doctrine, he ridicules the idea of having *beauty* represented in a picture, and addressing himself to the person whom he supposes to make so un-painter-like a request, he says, "The art of painting allows you all you wish ; you desire to have a beautiful object painted ; your horse, for instance, is led out of the stable in all his pampered beauty. The art of painting is ready to accommodate you ; you have the beautiful form you admired in nature exactly transferred to canvass. Be then satisfied ; the art of painting has given you what you wanted. It is no injury to the beauty of your Arabian, if the painter thinks he could have given the graces of his art more forcibly to your cart-horse."*

If a person ignorant of the art of painting were to be told, that a painter who

* Essay on Picturesque Beauty.

wished to give in any way the *graces* of his art, would prefer a cart-horse to an Arabian, he would be apt to think there was something very preposterous both in the art and the artist; and such must always be the consequence, when instead of endeavouring to shew the agreement between art and nature, even when they appear most at variance, a mysterious barrier is placed between them, to surprize and keep at a distance the uninitiated. To me the fact seems to be what we might naturally suppose; that Rubens, Vandyk, or Wovermans, when they wished to shew the graces of their art, painted beautiful horses; such as the general sense of mankind would call beautiful: gay pampered steeds with fine coats, and high in flesh. When they added, as they often did, a greater share of picturesqueness to these beautiful animals, it was not by degrading them to cart-horses and beasts of burthen; it was by means of sudden and spirited action, with such a correspondent and strongly marked exertion of muscles, and such wild disorder in the

mane, as might heighten the freedom and animation of their character, without injuring the elegance or grandeur of their form. If by giving *forcibly* the graces of his art, nothing further is meant than giving them with powerful impression, I cannot help thinking that Rubens, when he was transferring from nature to the canvass one of these noble animals in all the fulness and luxuriance of beauty, little imagined that he was throwing away his powers ; and as little suspected that any of the rough high-boned cart-horses he had placed in scenes with which they accorded, were more striking specimens of the graces of his art.

It would indeed be a wretched degradation of the art, should the horses of Raphael, Giulio Romano, Polidore, N. Poussin, the forms and characters of which they had studied with almost the same attention as those of the human figure ; in which too, as in the human figure, they had corrected the defects of common nature from their own exalted ideas of beauty, and from those of their great models, the ancient

sculptors ; and in which they certainly meant to display, and not feebly, the graces of their art,—should such ennobled animals be thought less adapted to display those graces, than a jade of Berchem, or Paul Potter.

The next and last point of difference between us, is with respect to the plumage of birds. Mr. Gilpin thinks the result of plumage, for he makes no exception, is picturesque ; and the whole seems to me another striking instance of his exclusive fondness for that character, and of his unwillingness on that account to allow any beauty or merit to smoothness. Indeed, as he supposes the picturesque solely to refer to painting, and that pictures can scarcely admit of any objects which are not of that character, and as he also allows (or rather asserts) that roughness is its distinguishing quality—it became necessary either to allow that an object might be picturesque without being rough, which would contradict his assertion, or to shew that there were other qualities which would render it so in

spite of its smoothness ; or, to use his own expression, would supply the room of roughness.

Speaking of the plumage of birds *, “ nothing,” he says, “ can be softer, nothing smoother to the touch ; yet it certainly is picturesque.” He then observes, “ it is not the smoothness of the surface which produces the effect ; it is not this we admire ; it is the breaking of the colours ; it is the bright green or purple, changing perhaps into a rich azure or velvet black ; from thence taking a semitint, and so on through all the varieties of colours : or if the colour be not changeable, it is the harmony we admire in these elegant little touches of nature’s pencil.”

It is singular that the colours of birds, and particularly those of a changeable kind, from which Mr. Burke has taken some of his happiest illustrations of the beautiful, should, by Mr. Gilpin, not only be cited as sources of the picturesque, but as so

* *Essay on Picturesque Beauty*, page 23.

abounding in that quality as to bestow on smoothness the effect of roughness. He has laid it down as a maxim, that a smooth building must be turned into a rough one before it can be picturesque; yet, in this instance, a smooth bird may be made so by means of colours, many of which with their gradations and changes, are universally acknowledged and admired as beautiful.

I cannot help repeating the same question on this subject as on the preceding one; if beautiful and changeable colours with their gradations, added to softness and smoothness of plumage, and to the harmony of the elegant little touches of nature's pencil make birds picturesque, what then are the qualities which make them beautiful?

But Mr. Gilpin himself has furnished me with the strongest proof how natural it is for all men, when they design to produce a picturesque image, to avoid all idea of smoothness. He has quoted Pindar's celebrated description of the eagle, as equally

poetical and picturesque; and such I believe it always has been thought. The *ruffled* plumage of the eagle, which Mr. Gilpin has put in italics, as the circumstance which most strongly marks that character, is both in Mr. West's translation, and Mr. Gray's imitation; but as far as I can judge, there is not the least trace of it in the original. I have not the most distant pretensions to any critical knowledge of the Greek language; yet still I think, that by the help of those interpreters who have studied it critically, an unlearned man, if he feels the spirit of a passage, may arrive at a pretty accurate idea of the force of the expressions. From them it appears to me, that far from describing the eagle with *ruffled* plumes, or with any circumstance truly picturesque, Pindar has, on the contrary, avoided every idea that might disturb the repose, and majestic beauty of his image. After he has described the eagle's flagging wing, he adds ὕψον ἰσμεν, which is so opposite to ruffled, that it seems to signify that perfect smoothness

and sleekness given by moisture; that oily suppleness so different from any thing crisp or rumpled; as ὑγρον ελαιον expresses the smooth, suppling, undrying quality of oil. The learned Christianus Damm interprets κνωσσων ὑγρον νωτον αιωρει, dormiens incurvatum (vel potius *leve*) tergum attollit; and the action is that of a gentle heaving from respiration, during a quiet repose. In another place Damm interprets ὑγροτης, mollities; all equally opposite to ruffled. Indeed we might almost suppose that Pindar, having intended to present an image both sublime and beautiful, had avoided every thing that might disturb its still and solemn grandeur; for he has thrown as it were into shade, the most marked and picturesque feature of that noble bird: κελαινωπιν δ' ἐπὶ οἱ νεφελαν ἀγκυλω κρατι, βλεφαρων ἄδυ κλαιστρον, κατεχευας; a feature which Homer, in a simile full of action and picturesque imagery, has placed in its fullest light:

‘Οἱ δ’ ὥστ’ αἰγυπιοὶ γαμφωνυχες, ἀγκυλοχειλαί,

Πετρὴ ἐφ’ ὑψηλῇ μεγάλα κλαζόντε μαχόνται.

Having been bold enough to criticise both the translation and imitation of Pin-

dar, I shall venture one step further, and try to account for the passage's having been so rendered. I think Mr. West and Mr. Gray might probably have been impressed with the same idea as Mr. Gilpin, that the imagery in this passage was highly picturesque, but might have felt that smooth feathers would not accord with that character; and therefore perhaps (as Sir Joshua Reynolds observes on Algarotti's ill-founded eulogium of a picture of Titian) they chose to find in Pindar, what they thought they ought to have found. With all the respect I have for their abilities (and Mr. Gray's cannot be rated too high) I must think that by one word they have changed the character of that famous passage; and it may be doubted whether they have improved it.

Were the image which they have substituted represented in painting, it might be more striking; more catching to the eye than Pindar's; and that is the true character of the picturesque: but his would have more of that repose, that solemn breadth, that freedom from all bustle,

which I believe accords more truly with the genuine unmixed characters both of beauty and sublimity*, and with the ideas of the great original.

I have pressed strongly on all the points of difference between Mr. Gilpin and me, because I think them very essential to the chief object I have had in view, that of recommending the study of pictures and of the principles of painting, as the best guide to that of nature, and to the improvement of real landscape. Could it be supposed that for the purpose of his own art, a painter would in general prefer a worn-out cart-horse to a beautiful Arabian ; or that such pieces of architecture as were universally admired for their beauty and elegance, would, if introduced in a picture, become formal, and cease to please,—no man would be disposed to consult an art which contradicted all his natural feelings. But were he to be informed that painters have

* Vide Sir Joshua Reynolds's Notes in Mason's *Du Fresnoy*, page 86.

always admired and copied beauty of every kind, (and strange it would be were it otherwise) in animals, as well as in the human species, that they neither reject smoothness nor symmetry, but only the ill-judged and tiresome display of them ; that with regard to regular and perfect architecture, it made a principal ornament in pictures of the highest class, but that while its smoothness, symmetry, and regularity were preserved, its formality was avoided ; in short, that the study of painting, far from abridging his pleasures, would open a variety of new sources of amusement, and without cutting off any of those which he already possessed, would only direct them into better channels---he might be disposed to consult an art, which promised many fresh and untasted delights, without forcing him to abandon all those which he had enjoyed before.

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

P. 16, l. 5. I CAN hardly think it necessary to make any excuse for calling Lord Orford Mr. Walpole; it is the name by which he is best known in the literary world, and to which his writings have given a celebrity much beyond what any hereditary honour can bestow. It is more necessary, perhaps, to make an apology for the liberty I must take of canvassing with freedom many positions in his very ingenious and entertaining Treatise on Modern Gardening. That treatise is written in a very high strain of panegyric on the art of which he gives so amusing a history: mine is a direct and undisguised attack upon it. The greater his authority, the more necessary it is to combat the impression which that alone will make on most minds. I do it, however, with great deference and reluctance; for I know how difficult it is to steer between the tameness of over-caution, and the appearance of acrimony, or of want of re-

spect towards a person for whom I feel so much, and to whom on so many accounts it is due. But he who is warmly engaged in a cause, and has to fight against strongly-rooted opinions upheld by powerful supporters, must, if he hopes to vanquish them, take every fair advantage of his opponents, and not seem too timid and fearful of giving offence where none is intended.

P. 17, l. 1. As some doubts have arisen about the meaning of the word *clump*, which so frequently occurs in this essay, it may not be improper to define what I mean by it. My idea of a *clump*, in contradistinction to a group, is, *any close mass of trees of the same age and growth, totally detached from all others*. I have generally supposed them to be of a round, or at least of a regular form: their size of course must vary; and no rule can well be given when such a detached mass ceases to be a clump, and may be called a plantation.

P. 23, l. 22. There is frequently a resemblance, and a very happy one, between the picturesque irregularities of bye-roads, and those of brooks and rivers; just as there is a most unfortunate likeness between the regularity of gravel-walks and roads, and those of artificial rivers, where all the effects of accident have been destroyed or guarded against. An example has been given of picturesque irregularity in a road, where, from meeting with some obstruction, it branches off for a time on each side: a similar circumstance in a

brook is described in the Abbé Delille's exquisite Poem on Gardens, which I had not read when I first published my essay, but which I have hardly ceased to read since I had it in my possession. I shall only transcribe the lines which suit my particular purpose; I trust, however, they will induce the reader to look over the whole description, where he will find the various charms of a rapid little stream, painted with a most congenial life and animation.

Plus loin il se separe en deux ruisseaux agiles;
Qui se suivant l'un l'autre avec rapidité,
Disputent de vitesse et de limpidité.

The whole poem indeed is full of the justest taste, the nicest discrimination, and the most brilliant imagery, and all expressed in the happiest, and most poetical style. I should think myself very ungrateful, if I did not acknowledge the very great pleasure and instruction I have received from it, and add my testimony to that I believe of every other reader.

P. 27, l. last. The use of attending to the effects of accident and neglect, which has been exemplified in trees and hollow lanes, extends to objects of much greater importance; to every species of improvement, even to the highest and most important of all, that of government. Neither improvers nor legislators will leave every thing to neglect and accident; but it certainly is wise in both, by carefully ob-

serving all the effects which have arisen from them, to learn how to take advantage of future changes, and above all to learn that most useful lesson, not to suppress the workings of nature, but to watch and take indications from them ; for who would choose, to settle in that place, or under that government, where the warnings, indications, and all the free efforts of nature, were forcibly counteracted and suppressed ?

P. 31, l. 12. The destruction of so many picturesque circumstances by the prevailing passion for levelling, is mentioned with regret in many parts of this essay : the term itself may suggest regrets and apprehensions of a more serious kind. To level, in a very usual sense of the word, means to take away all distinctions ; a principle that, when made general, and brought into action by any determined improver either of grounds or governments, occasions such mischiefs, as time slowly, if ever, repairs ; and which are hardly more dreaded by monarchs than painters.

A good landscape is that in which all the parts are free and unconstrained, but in which, though some are prominent and highly illuminated, and others in shade and retirement ; some rough, and others more smooth and polished, yet they are all necessary to the beauty, energy, effect, and harmony of the whole. I do not see how a good government can be more exactly defined ; and as this definition suits every style of

landscape, from the plainest and simplest to the most splendid and complicated, and excludes nothing but tameness and confusion, so it equally suits all free governments, and only excludes anarchy and despotism. It must be always remembered however, that despotism is the most complete leveller; and he who clears and levels every thing round his own lofty mansion, seems to me to have very Turkish principles of improvement.

P. 32, l. 14. Among the various ill effects occasioned by the prevailing system of making the ground every where, and in all cases smooth and even, none is more lamented by the painter than that of covering up the picturesque roots of old trees, which seem to fasten on the earth with their dragon claws. Such were those of the beech that I have mentioned with so much regret; it is even worse when the spurs of a large oak, which give to its base such a look of firmness and stability, and shew what must be the rivets beneath that enable him to defy the tempest, are completely moulded up, for the sake of bringing the whole of the ground to one exact level, or for some such paltry consideration. The trunk then loses one of the most marked and striking parts of its character, and looks like an enormous post stuck into the ground.

P. 57, l. 15. It may appear singular that in mentioning trees of a picturesque character, I should have excepted the young ash; for, as it is a great favourite

with painters, though at no age a popular tree, it may seem inconsistent to those who refer the term to art only, that I should deny it to be picturesque. But, as I have before remarked; if all the objects which painters have been fond of representing were therefore to be called picturesque, it would be a term of little distinction. The young ash has every principle of beauty; freshness and delicacy of foliage, smoothness of bark, elegance of form; nor am I surprised that Virgil, whose poetry has so much of those qualities, should call the ash the most beautiful tree in the woods: but when its own leaves are changed to the autumnal tint, and when contrasted with ruder or more massive shapes or colours, it becomes part of a picturesque circumstance, without changing its own nature.

P. 68, l. last. There is hardly any principle of beauty more general than that of smoothness; baldness, however, seems to be an exception; as smoothness in that case, though it may contribute to give a picturesque character, can never be beautiful. It is, however, an exception, which instead of weakening, confirms what I have said, and shews the constant opposition of the two characters, even where their causes appear to be confounded.

Baldness is not the smoothness of youth, health, and freshness, but of age and decay. It is picturesque from those associations, and from producing peculiarity of character, by destroying the usual symmetry and regularity of the face.

When a bald head is well plastered and floured, and the boundary of the forehead distinctly marked in pomatum and powder, it has as little pretension to picturesqueness as to beauty.

P.94. l.20. That the sublime in poetry is founded on the terrible, seems to be taken for granted by Longinus; and probably on the authority of Aristotle. That great father of criticism has indeed in his poetics dwelt much less on epic poetry, in which perhaps the highest specimens of the sublime are to be found, than on tragedy: we cannot, however, suppose him to have been ignorant that sublimity is one striking character of the tragic muse; and as he has stated terror and pity to be the two principal means by which she produces her effects, we can hardly doubt which of them she would employ, when she meant to produce sublimity. In our own language we often distinguish those two great sources of human emotion which Aristotle calls το φοβερον, και το ελεεινον, or the terrible, and the pathetic, by the *sublime*, and the *pathetic*: whether he or Longinus, according to the established idiom, could have used το υψηλον in the same sense, those who are critics in the language may be able to determine; if they could not, it seems by no means improbable that they should have substituted the most efficient cause, for the character itself. In speaking of writers who

introduce the marvellous alone into their tragedies, Aristotle says 'Θι δε, μη το φοβερον, αλλα το τερατωδες μονον παρασκευαζοντες, ουδεν τραγωδια κοινωνησι. Now, if Aristotle can be supposed to have meant, that if terrific, as well as marvellous circumstances had been introduced, the whole would then have been truly tragical, the authors of many modern dramas, in which the excess of all that is terrific has been very severely, and I believe very justly censured by modern critics, as having nothing in common with the true spirit of tragedy, might take refuge under the authority of the ancient: but if we conceive him to have meant by το φοβερον those grand and awful circumstances, which when selected with judgment, and impressed in their full force, can hardly fail of being sublime, no such refuge will be afforded. If we were to imitate the turn of Aristotle's criticism in censuring the exaggerated use of terror in the dramas to which I have alluded, we might say, that the authors of them having displayed, not the sublime, but only the terrific, had nothing of the genuine spirit of tragedy. Longinus has in several places made use of the words φοβερος and δεινος, both of which are generally translated terrible, nearly as we should use the word sublime: speaking of a bombast passage he says, if you examine it, εκ τε φοβερε, κατ' ολιγον υπονοσει προς το καταφρονητον; and again, when he is discriminating between

a sublime and a disgusting image, he says *ου γαρ δεινον ποιησεν το ειδωλον, αλλα μισητον*. Among the different passages which he has quoted as sublime, there are none on which he has more fully expatiated, than those in which terror is the leading character; and what perhaps is the most convincing proof of his opinion, he has cited other passages intended to be sublime, but which, as he shews, are not so, because the authors of them failed in their aim of making them terrible; and that, no doubt might remain on his reader's mind, he has distinctly pointed out the cause of the failure, by opposing to their want of judgment, the skill and judgment of Homer in selecting those circumstances, by which the terrible is most strongly impressed on the imagination. It is said, however, that *δεινον* signifies also what is excellent, or striking in various ways, as well as terrible; but how came it by such a signification? Clearly because terror in its various modifications, is the cause of all that is most striking. The Italians apply such expressions to any striking works of art; a fine picture or statue (no matter what the subject) is called *un spavento*; and the style of the grandest of modern artists is called

Di Michel' Agnol' la *terribil'* via.

A more familiar instance may be given to the English reader, of the use which is continually

made of the word terrible, for the purpose of raising our ideas of the objects to which it is applied; and certainly by persons who never read Aristotle, or Longinus, or even Mr. Burke: who can hear at a horse-race, of *the terrible high bred cattle*, and not feel how universally the same idea has prevailed.

P. 105. l. 6. The instrument for the purpose of curling and crisping the hair seems to be of very ancient date; as Virgil, who probably studied the *costume* of the heroic age, supposes it to have been in use at the time of the Trojan war, and makes Turnus speak contemptuously of Æneas for having his locks perfumed, and, as Madame de Sevigné expresses it, *frisés naturellement avec le fer*,

Vibratos calido ferro, myrrhæque madentes.

The *natural* roughness or crispness of hair is often mentioned as a beauty—*l'aurée crespè crini*—*capelli crespè*, & *lunghe*, & *d'oro*.

In many points the hair has a striking relation to trees; they resemble each other in their intricacy, their ductility, the quickness of their growth, their seeming to acquire fresh vigour from being cut, and in their being detached from the solid bodies whence they spring; they are the varied boundaries, the loose and airy fringes, without which mere earth, or mere flesh, however beautifully

formed, however engagingly coloured, is bald and imperfect, and wants its most becoming ornament.

In catholic countries, where the nuns, those unfortunate victims of avarice and superstition, are supposed to renounce all idea of pleasing our sex, the first ceremony is that of cutting off their hair, as a sacrifice of the most seducing ornament of beauty; and the formal edge of the fillet, which prevents a single hair from escaping, is well contrived to deaden the effect of features.

P. 106. l. 10. The epithets *horridus* and *horrens*, are frequently applied to sharp pointed and jagged objects in an upright position; as, *horridior rusco*, *horrentibus hastis*, *cautibus horrens*, &c. and indeed, according to Stevens, an erect position of objects, is the strict and proper meaning of the verb from which they are derived; *horreo, proprie cum pili setaeque in animante eriguntur; capilli horrent*; as we say, stand an end. But the appearance of the arbutus is so remarkably pleasing, that an epithet of which almost all the associations are unpleasing, seems at first sight very oddly applied to it. Different interpretations have been proposed. Martyn thinks the arbutus is called *horrida*, from the roughness of its bark; in which the learned Heyne agrees with him: this interpretation may very fairly be

admitted; but I rather think that an epithet applied to the tree in general, is more likely to have been given from its general appearance, than from a particular part less apparent, and often entirely hidden. Many plants point their leaves downwards, as the lilac, chestnut, Portugal laurel, &c.; and whoever compares the arbutus and the Portugal laurel, in both of which the leaves are serrated, will find how strongly the epithet *horrens* applies to the former.

In the Delphin edition the arbutus is supposed to be called *horrida*, *quia raris est foliis*; but nothing can be less thin of leaves than the *frondentia arbuta* (as Virgil calls them in another place) when in a flourishing state. This idea, I think, is not unlikely to have been adopted from a verse in the seventh eclogue, *rara tegit arbutus umbrâ*, which in the same edition is interpreted *raris inumbrat foliis*; but surely if *rara* do mean thin, as Martyn has also interpreted it, nothing can less accord with *tegit*, and with the shepherd's request, *solstitium pecori defendite*. As the meaning of the word *rara* in this passage has been a good deal canvassed, I hope I may be indulged in following the train of criticism which has thus incidentally offered itself. The learned and highly distinguished commentator whom I have lately mentioned, in speaking of this passage says, *rara vero umbra*,

aut ut ad naturam arboris humilis, nec admodum patulis respiciatur, aut ut rara non urgendum sit, ut Ecl. 5. 7. The passage to which he refers in the fifth Eclogue, is

Sive sub incertas Zephyris mutantibus umbras:

Sive antro potius succedimus: aspice ut antrum

Silvestris raris sparsit labrusca racemis.

And he observes upon it, "*raris autem hic non urgendum, uti Burm. & Martin. faciunt; alias in vitio hoc esset, quod rari sunt racemi: sed simpliciter notat naturam racemorum sive uvarum, passim e palmitibus per antri ostium serpentibus pendentium, ut adeo per intervallos dies intret.*" Ita. & Ecl. 7. 46. "*Et quæ vos rarâ viridis tegit arbutus umbra.*" As far as these observations relate to the vine, and to the whole of that passage, they are perfectly just; but I do not think they will apply to the arbutus, or to the general spirit of the other. In the one passage the imagery is playful and varying; the air fresh and in motion, the Zephyrs blowing, and quickly changing the shadows; and from the pliant texture of the vine, the extremities of its trailing branches, as well as its pendant clusters, are easily agitated by the wind: and the expression is, *raris sparsit racemis*. In the other, every thing announces the stillness and repose of summer heat, when the close and compact texture of the arbutus leaves, and its stiff branches, which yield less to the

wind than those of almost any other tree, would have none to contend with; and the expression is *rara tegit umbra*. The epithet *raris*, as signifying loose, or separate, and consequently letting in the light by intervals, is an appropriate one to the separate clusters of the vine, or to its long rambling young shoots, but is very far from being so to the arbutus; it would be only saying of it, what is generally true of every shade produced by foliage alone, namely, that it does not *completely* exclude the light. The arbutus appears to have been a favourite tree and a favourite shade among the Romans: Ovid in describing a shady and sequestered grove and fountain, has not forgot it, or its shade,

Silva nemus non alta facit, tegit arbutus herbam.

Propertius likewise speaks of its beauty; and from the position, indicates its assistant shade.

Surgat & in solis formosior arbutus antris.

Horace speaks voluptuously of the pleasure of being stretched under its canopy,

Nunc viridi membra sub arbuto
Stratus.

And when Virgil, in the passage that has given rise to this discussion, together with the turf and the fountain apostrophizes the arbutus which protects them with its boughs, he pro-

bably meant to convey a compliment to such a shade in the epithet; such as its delightful, or its excellent shade. Now as *rarus*, like the correspondent words in our own and other languages, has that meaning, and as none can more perfectly accord with the sense and spirit of the passage, there seems to be some reasonable ground for supposing it to be that of Virgil. We find in Stevens's explanation of the word, *rarum quod non ubique reperitur unde pro præstanti sumitur*; and in that sense Ovid seems to have used it in a passage very opposite to the present subject,

Patulis rarissima ramis
Sacra Jovi quercus.

Where, if *rarissima* be interpreted very thin, or letting in the light at many intervals, it would as ill agree with *patulis*, as *rara* in the same sense would with *tegit*. Another verse in Ovid,

Rara quidem facie, sed rarior arte canendi,

And one in Statius,

Laudati Juvenis rarissima conjux,

clearly shew that the word was used simply as excellent; and I hope may be thought sufficient to justify me in having ventured to propose an interpretation of mine, in opposition to that of so eminent a critic.

P. 146. l. 5. The following instance very clearly shews, how much the love of strong oppositions and striking effects is apt to make painters neglect or sacrifice the qualities of beauty, even where they are most requisite. In Sir Joshua Reynolds's collection there was a head by Rembrandt, which was supposed to be intended for that of Achilles: the form of the face had more of beauty than is usual in those of Rembrandt; but in order to give a more glittering effect to the helmet, he had kept down the colour of the flesh to so low a tone, that it appeared almost black. If Sir Joshua (who I believe has mentioned this picture in some of his works) thought the silvery tint of Guido more suited to express the delicacy of female beauty than even the golden hue of Titian, what must he have thought of changing the young and beautiful Achilles into an Othello!

P. 233, l. last. The circumstance of Kent's having *paint-
ed* nothing but young beeches, because he had been used to *plant* them, is taken from Mr. Walpole. His works are so much read, and his manner of treating all subjects is so lively and amusing, as well as ingenious, that I supposed this anecdote was familiar to every body; nor could I have thought it necessary to put the words *painter*, *plant*, and *landscapes* in Italics, in order to prevent any misapprehension of my meaning. But Mr. G. Mason

has conceived, from what I have said; that I disapprove of *plantations* of young beeches, and asks with some triumph, whether I would have had Kent plant old ones, as a nursery for dead groves?*

I flatter myself, that hitherto I have not mistated the meaning of any author whom I have taken the liberty to criticise, and I shall certainly be very careful in future; for I feel how infinitely ashamed I should be, were I ever to be convicted of having grossly perverted another person's ideas, and then triumphed over my own mistatement.

P. 246. l. 15. Kent has not only been celebrated by Mr. Walpole in his *Treatise on Modern Gardening*, but likewise by Dr. Warton, and in a very high style of panegyric, in a Poem of his called the *Enthusiast*; from which the following very apposite quotation has been cited in opposition to my censures, by Mr. G. Mason.

Can Kent design like nature? Mark where Thames
Plenty and pleasure pours through Lincoln's meads:
Can the great artist, though with taste supreme
Endued, one beauty to this Eden add?
Though he by rules unfetter'd, boldly scorns
Formality and method—round and square
Disdaining, plans irregularly great.

There cannot be a more decided and pointed opinion against all I have said of Kent; it

* *Essay on Design in Gardening*, page 109.

remains only to consider what degree of weight is due to that opinion. I am ready to acknowledge that the sentiments of poets with respect to the general beauties of nature, ought always to have great weight; for poetical and picturesque ideas are congenial: but where a poet means to celebrate the talents of a particular person, the case is different, as he is apt, from a very natural enthusiasm, to bestow upon him his own ideas of excellence and freedom from defects, without weighing too minutely whether he be entitled to such unreserved praise. And besides, poetry for the most part deals in strong general praise or censure, and does not often stop to discriminate. I have great respect for Dr. Warton's character both as a man and as a poet, and I am sorry that the defence of my own judgment should oblige me in any way to question the accuracy of his; but I must own that I am led to doubt of it in these points, from the lines that immediately follow those which have been quoted.

Creative Titian, can thy vivid strokes,
Or thine, O graceful Raphael, dare to vie
With the rich tints that paint the breathing mead,
The thousand colour'd tulip, violet's bell
Snow-clad and meek, the vermil-tinctured rose,
And golden crocus.

Had it so happened that Dr. Warton had applied to the study of pictures, and of the principles on which their excellence depends,

those talents which in other studies have gained him such deserved reputation, he would have known that to challenge Titian to vie with tulips and crocusses, is hardly less improper than to make the same challenge to Raphael; that in truth he might almost as well have pitted nature against nature, and challenged a forest in autumn to vie with a flower-garden in spring; and that although Titian is renowned above all other painters for the glow and richness of his colours, yet that Van Huyssum came infinitely nearer to the tints of flowers in point of exact imitation, and probability of deception, without aspiring to the same high and general fame as a colourist. The study of pictures also, by presenting the varied and well-chosen forms, which with their numberless happy combinations are displayed in the works of the most eminent painters, would have convinced Dr. Warton, that Kent and his followers had made a very small progress in the choice of forms, or in the manner of arranging them. They disdained indeed the square and measured formality and method of the old style, but substituted a method and formality of their own, in which distinct and regular curves had no little share; and I am very sure that if Dr. Warton, when his mind was full of the compositions of eminent masters, had been shewn the prints of the Fairy Queen, he would not have ventured to ask—"Can Ken

design like nature?"—the obvious ridicule would have struck him too forcibly.

P. 237. l. 3. I cannot so well describe the strong impression, and the various instruction that I received from Sir Joshua Reynolds's discourses, as in the words which Madame Roland has applied to a very different guide. "*Il sembla que c'étoit l'aliment qui me fut propre, & l'interprète des sentimens que j'avois avant lui, mais que lui seul pouvoit m'expliquer.*" The same impression, and with additional delight, I received from his conversation. It was as pleasing as it was instructive; I never missed any opportunity of enjoying it, and I never think of it without regret.

Few men had more numerous friends, in more various ranks of life, or more warmly attached. Those among them, who now honour and cherish his memory, as they loved and admired him when living, must surely be hurt at the publication of certain letters ascribed to him, which, it will readily be allowed, are very unlike his printed works—the noble produce of the vigour and maturity of his age. These letters (whatever they may be) appear to be written with the hasty negligence of early and unsuspecting youth: if they be genuine, they may indeed suggest very severe reflections on the persons who gave them up, and on those who published them,

but can little affect the high, and firmly established reputation of their supposed author; for, in my opinion, it would be just as fair to draw an inference from his former ignorance in painting, as from his former ignorance in writing; just as conclusive, to produce some of his early bad pictures, to prove that he did not paint Mrs. Siddons, or Cardinal Beaufort, as to bring forth early letters, to shew that he did not compose his discourses.

The most valuable part of every man's education, is that which he receives from himself, from his own untutored reflections; especially when the active energy of his character, makes ample amends for the want of a more finished course of study. Such a man, and so formed was Sir Joshua Reynolds; his observations on a variety of subjects, as well as on his own art, were those of a strong original mind, and his language, both in speaking and writing, gave them their full value. In his conversation there was a peculiar mildness, and a simplicity highly interesting, but which promised little else; and I have often been struck with the contrast, between that simplicity of manner, and the vigour of his thoughts and expressions. Some of our common friends have made the same reflection; and indeed many parts of his discourses, and those not the least impressive, appeared like transcripts of what he had spoken.

P. 256. l. 10. I have mentioned in the text the wretched effect of taking away the outside trees from groups where they had long grown together; it is to the full as bad when they are incautiously removed from the front of an extended wood, for it can hardly ever be done without making a manifest gap, in itself very unpleasant, and at the same time letting in the view towards a number of naked stems behind. It appears, however, that the founder of the modern school did it upon system. "Where the plumage of an ancient wood extended wide its undulating canopy and stood venerable in darkness, Kent," says Mr. Walpole, "thinned its foremost ranks." One should really be led to conclude from every expression in this description, that the writer intended to give us a horror for the practice, which yet, from the place where it is mentioned, we must suppose him to have approved. The bad consequence of this system of separating trees which had long grown together, is nowhere more apparent, than when an old avenue is broken into clumps; yet, it may very well happen that a landscape-painter, however strongly he may condemn the alteration as it affected the general views and the character of the place, might find some particular advantages from it with respect to his own art: for as he is not obliged to make an exact por-

trait, it is sufficient for his purpose if he discover the principal materials for composition, from the spot where he places himself. He therefore may select a view between any two of the clumps; and as a very slight alteration, in his expeditious art, turns them into groups, the whole may form a very pleasing landscape: again, as only two of the clumps would appear, no one could suspect from such a picture or drawing, that there were other clumps which strongly marked the old line of the avenue from every part where they were seen. All this is perfectly fair in the painter with reference to his own art; but were he employed to shew what would be the future effect of breaking an avenue into clumps, it would in the same degree be unfair; it would in fact be a deception, and tend to mislead his employer. Yet this is precisely what Mr. Repton has done, for the purpose of shewing how an avenue may be broken with good effect. He has in one plate represented the avenue on which the operation is to be performed, at its length, and of course as describing the straight line; and in common justice he ought to have given the same view of it when broken: but he well knew what a figure his clumps would make when the straight line was dotted with them. He therefore in the other plate has very dextrously changed both the point of view, and the scale; and as he knew that even

a third clump would have marked the straight line, he has supposed himself at the exact point from which only two of them could be introduced into the drawing; and to this painter-like liberty, he has added that of varying their forms, so as to give them some appearance of natural groups. Mr. Repton cannot be ignorant that when trees have long been pressed on each side by others, whenever one or more of them are left separate, two of their sides must be naked and flattened; and that although by degrees the nakedness is clothed with small boughs and with leaves, hardly any length of time will make the flatness completely disappear. This is what on such occasions ought fairly to be stated; and if a drawing or engraving be made, ought fairly to be represented: but it is singular that the person who has most strongly written against the use of applying painting to landscape gardening, should have furnished the most flagrant instance of its abuse.

271. l. 11. Vanity is a general enemy to all improvement; and there is no such enemy to the real improvement of the beauty of grounds, as the foolish vanity of making a parade of their extent, and of exhibiting various uninteresting marks of the owner's property, under the title of "Appropriation." Where there *are* any noble features that are debased by meaner objects,

where greater extent would show a rich and varied boundary, whatever chokes up, or degrades such scenes, should of course be removed: but where there are no such features, no such boundaries, to appropriate, by destroying many a pleasant meadow, and by showing you, when they are laid into one great common, green enough to surfeit a man in a calenture; to appropriate, by clumping their naked hedge-rows, and planting other clumps and patches of exotics, which seem to stare about them and wonder how they came there; to appropriate, by demolishing many a cheerful retired cottage, that interfered with nothing but the despotic love of exclusion, and make amends, perhaps, by building a village *regularly* picturesque—is to appropriate, by disgusting all whose taste is not insensible or depraved, just as an alderman appropriates a plate of turtle, by sneezing over it.

P. 281. l. 5. I believe there are only three sorts of the lower evergreens natural to this country, holly, box, and juniper; to which, on account of the slowness of its growth, and its doing so well under the drip of other trees, may be added the yew. There is, however, a great variety of exotics which are as hardy as any of our native plants, with many others that will succeed in sheltered spots; and the most scrupulous person will allow, that among firs and pines, the greatest part of which

are exotics, they are perfectly in character : and, should these be mixed indiscriminately without any design or arrangement, they still must produce a rich and a varied effect if compared to a close wood of firs only. But on the other hand, where the trees have always had full room to expand, an open grove of large spreading pines is peculiarly solemn, and that solemnity might occasionally be varied, and in some respects heightened, by a mixture of yews and cypresses, which at the same time would give an idea of extreme retirement, and of sepulchral melancholy. In other parts a very pleasing contrast in winter might be formed by holly, arbutus, laurustinus, and others that bear berries and flowers at that season. Whoever has been at Mount Edgcombe and remembers the mixture of the arbutus, &c. with the spreading pines, will want no further recommendation of this method : I must own that amidst all the grand features of that noble place, it made no slight impression on me.

P. 301, l. 8. What has been said of the naked edges of Mr. Brown's canals, may be illustrated by an observation of Mr. Burke in the Sublime and Beautiful. " When we look along a naked wall, from the evenness of the object the eye runs along its whole space, and arrives quickly at its termination."* This accounts for the total

* P. 27.

want of all that is picturesque, and of all interest whatsoever, in a continuation of naked, edgy lines; for where there is nothing to detain the eye, there is nothing to amuse it. I may add, that wherever ground is cut with a sharp instrument, it has that ideal effect on the eye; it is a metaphor which naturally prevails in many languages, where lines, from whatever cause, are hard and edgy. When An. Caracci speaks of the edginess of Raphael compared with Correggio, he uses the expression, *così duro, & tagliente* — *couleurs tranchantes, &c.*

P. 307, l. 1. It is difficult to define with any precision, what may properly be called the *bank* of a river: in its most extended acceptation, it may mean whatever is seen from the water; I wish it to be taken here in its most confined sense, as that which immediately rises above the water till another level begins, or some distinct termination. This, in certain instances, will be very clear; as where a flat meadow (but not sloped down to the water by art) joins the river. It will be equally clear, where the general bank is steep, if a road be carried near the bottom; for such an artificial level will form a distinct *near* bank, and one which would be distinctly marked in a picture. The highest part to which the flood generally reaches, is also a very usual boundary; and in most

places there is something which separates the immediate bank, from the general scenery that encloses the river. This near bank being in the foreground, is of the greatest consequence: wherever that is regularly sloped and smoothed, whatever beauty or grandeur there may be *above*, the character of the *river* is gone.

P. 312, l. last. Mr. Repton, who is deservedly at the head of his profession, might effectually correct the errors of his predecessors, if to his taste and facility in drawing (an advantage they did not possess), to his quickness of observation, and to his experience in the practical part, he were to add an attentive study of what the higher artists have done, both in their pictures and drawings. Their selections and arrangements would point out many beautiful compositions and effects in nature, which, without such a study, may escape the most experienced observer.

The fatal rock on which all professed improvers are likely to split, is that of system: they become mannerists, both from getting fond of what they have done before, and from the ease of repeating what they have so often practised; but to be reckoned a mannerist, is at least as great a reproach to the improver as to the painter. Mr. Brown seems to have been perfectly satisfied, when he had made a

natural river look like an artificial one ; I hope Mr. Repton will have a nobler ambition—that of having his pieces of water mistaken for natural lakes and rivers.

P.318, l.9. Although I have allowed Mr. Brown the negative merit of having left the wooded bank at Blenheim as he found it, yet I cannot allow that he or any of his school could ever have felt or distinguished the peculiar beauties of its *unimproved* state. A professed improver is in many respects like a professed picture-cleaner ; the one is always occupied with grounds, and the other with pictures ; but the eyes and taste of both are in general so vitiated by their practice, that they see nothing in either but subjects for smoothing and polishing ; and they work on, till they have skinned and flayed every thing they meddle with. Those characteristic, and spirited roughnesses, together with that patina, the varnish of time, which time only can give, (and which in pictures may sometimes hide crudities which escape even the last glazing of the painter) immediately disappear ; and pictures and places are scoured as bright as Scriblerus's shield, and with as little remorse on the part of the scourers.

P.320, l.5. As I have dwelt very much on the bad effect of distinct edges, it may be right to observe, that whenever a separation of the general covering of the ground, whether grass,

heath, moss, or whatever it be, is made by the action of water or frost, or by the tread of animals, it is free from that sharp liny appearance which the spade always leaves. Such edginess is scarcely less adverse to the beautiful than to the picturesque: it is hard and cutting; it destroys all variety and play of outline, and every kind of intricacy. Digging, therefore, with the edges it occasions, is a blemish, which is endured at first, and with reason, for the sake of luxuriant vegetation: and in some cases, as where the plants are very small, or where flowers are cultivated, must always be continued; but when the end is answered, why continue the blemish? No one, I believe, would think it right to dig a circle or an oval and keep its edges pared, round a group of kalmeas, azaleas, rhododendrons, &c. that grew luxuriantly in their own natural soil and climate, in order to make the whole look more beautiful. Why then continue to dig round them, or any other foreign plants in this country, after they have begun to grow as freely of their own? Why not suffer them to appear without the marks of culture,

As glowing in their *native* bed?

P. 323, l. 9. As Blenheim is the only place I have criticised by name, an apology is due to the noble possessor of it, to whom, on many ac-

counts I should be particularly sorry to give offence, for the freedom I have taken. I trust, however, that the liberality of mind, which naturally accompanies that love and knowledge of the fine arts for which he is so distinguished, will make him feel that in criticising modern gardening, it would have been unfair to Mr. Brown not to have mentioned his most famous work; and that my silence on that head, would have been attributed to other motives than those of delicacy and respect. I must also add in my defence, that I can hardly look upon Blenheim in the light of common private property: it has the glorious and singular distinction of being a national reward for great national services: and the public has a more than common interest, in all that concerns so noble a monument.

P. 341, l. 16. The language (if it may be so called) by which objects of sight make themselves intelligible, is exactly like that of speech. To a man who is used to look at nature, pictures, or drawings with a painter's eye, the slightest hint, on the slightest inspection, conveys a perfect and intelligible meaning; just as the slightest sound, with the most negligent articulation, conveys meaning to an ear that is well acquainted with the language of the speaker: but to a person little versed in that language, such a sound is quite unintelligible;

he must have every word pronounced distinctly and articulately.

Then again, as these slight hints and slurred articulations, have often a grace and spirit in language which is lost when words are distinctly pronounced; so many of these slight and expressive touches both in art and in nature, give most pleasure to those who are thoroughly versed in the language. This may, perhaps, in some degree account for the plainly marked distinctions in improvement; for as in order to convey any idea to a man unused to a language addressed to *one* sense, you must mark every *word*; so to a man unused to it when addressed to *another* sense you must mark every *object*; must cut sharp lines, must whiten, redden, blacken, &c. &c.

END OF VOL. I.

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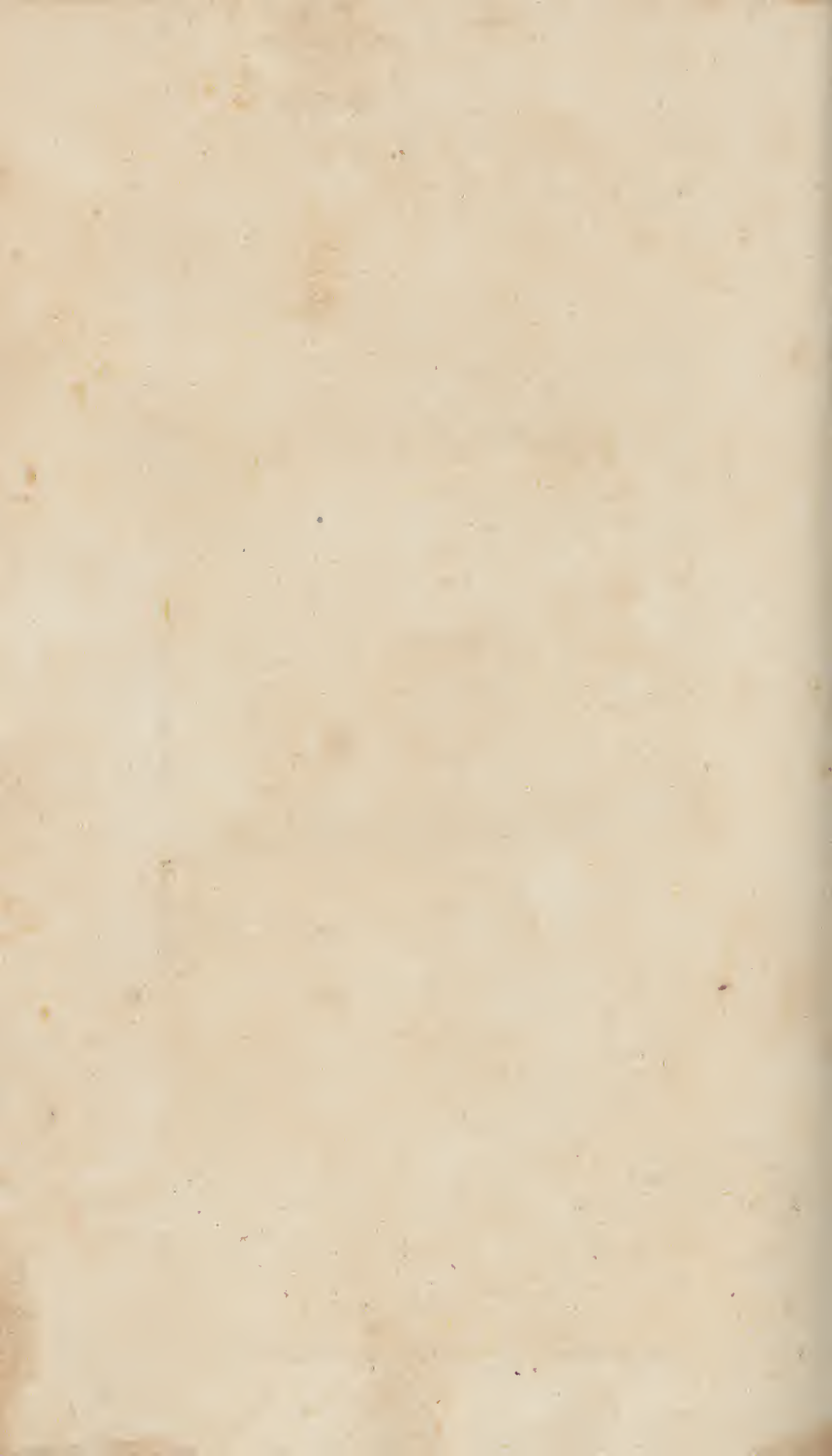
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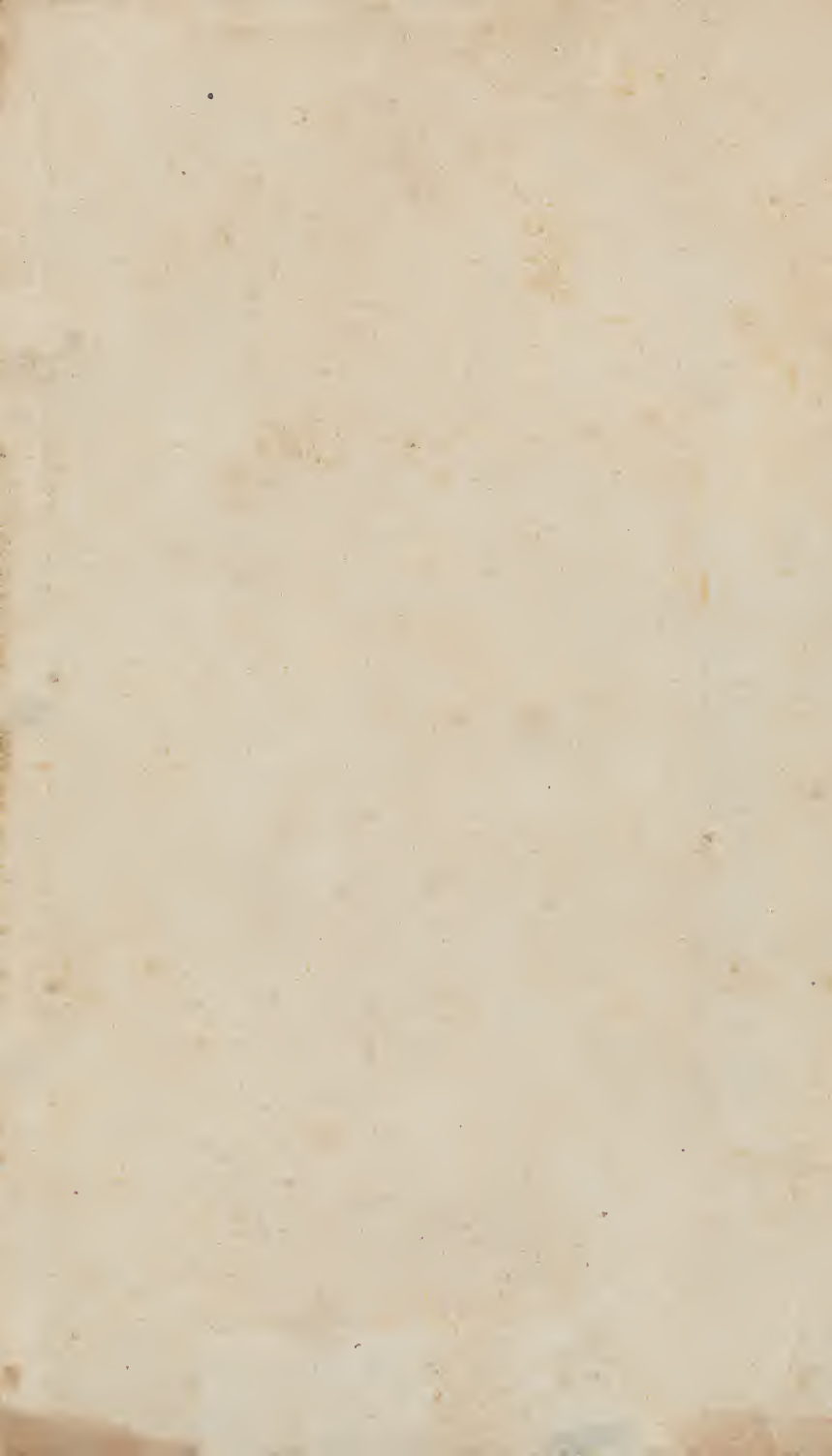
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